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JOHN DE WITT

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JOHN DE WITT

GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND

OR

TWENTY YEARS OF A PARLIAMENTARY REPUBLIC

BY

M. ANTONIN LEFÈVRE PONTALIS

TRANSLATED BY S. E. AND A. STEPHENSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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TRANSLATORS' PREFACE.

The Translators believe that no apology is needed for offering to the English public the life of a man whose history is so intimately connected with that of the England of his day as was John de Witt's. They give it in all its details as related by M. Lefèvre Pontalis, omitting only the many footnotes relating to State papers and other documents which he has so laboriously searched in order to obtain a complete picture of the man and his surroundings. For those who wish to study the whole question in further detail, the notes in the original are useful; but a translation is not intended for the student so much as for the general reader, who will probably be gladly spared the trouble of constantly glancing at the foot of the page to notes which he has no opportunity or intention of verifying. The references to published works and manuscripts—Dutch, French, and English—are very numerous, and testify that no pains have been spared by the Author to secure accuracy in all points, great or small. The Translators have been careful to verify all quotations from English sources, and have in some instances corrected misapprehensions which occur in the original work with reference to English affairs.

PREFACE.

Cardinal Tournon once asked Amyot why he took such pains to bring to life again the heroes of Plutarch. 'Because it is profitable,' replied he, 'to converse with the dead.' Among these illustrious dead, John de Witt holds a place. In him we find a man of worth greater than any mere statesmanship, and character higher even than his talents. He lived and died in the service of the cause he had made his own, that of the liberty of his country, which he never ceased to defend. Charged in his capacity of Grand Pensionary with the government of Holland for twenty years, from 1652 to 1672, he has left a name inseparable from the history of the seventeenth century. Abroad, his ministry secured to the republic of the United Provinces a place in the highest rank of European policy, by gaining it entrance into the circle of the great powers—France, England, and Spain. At home, John de Witt gave and maintained to the republican party victory over the friends of Orange during the minority of William III. The catastrophe of his tragical death recalls to us the violence of the popular reaction which restored the powers of the ancient stadtholders, and made the Prince of Orange the defender of the United Provinces against foreign invasion.

The history of John de Witt has already been the theme of a number of works, Dutch, German, and English, which cannot be passed over without mention. We have first that of Van der Hoeven,[1] which appeared in the eighteenth century, and which, although not drawn from the original sources, is nevertheless indispensable for reference. Herr Simons has added no new documents in his three volumes more recently published. Judging by the title he gave them of 'John de Witt and his Times,'[2] he appears to have intended to relate the general history of the republic, rather than the life of the Grand Pensionary. Quite lately Mr. Geddes[3] has undertaken researches which leave nothing to be desired, but he has as yet published only one volume, which stops short at the first two years of De Witt's administration. In France until now, M. Mignet alone has touched lightly, but with a master's hand, upon this period of history, in some chapters of his justly celebrated work on the Negotiations relative to the Spanish succession. As to the minor publications which do credit to Dutch authorship, and which it would be sufficient to collect to gather the materials for a complete history, they are too numerous to be all referred to here; they will be found mentioned in the notes to these two volumes. It is impossible, however, to pass over the instructive commentaries which accompany M. Chair van Buren's edition of Wicquefort, or the many singularly learned notes of Messrs. Veegens and Schotel, or those articles, bearing the stamp of professorial

[1] Van der Hoeven, *Leven en Dood der Heeren Gebroeders J. en C. de Witt.* Amsterdam, 1705, translated into French and abridged. Utrecht, 1709.

[2] Simons, *Johann de Witt und seine Zeit.* Erfurt, 1835, 1836. The third volume was published in Dutch at Amsterdam in 1842.

[3] Geddes, *History of the Administration of John de Witt*, vol. i., ending with the year 1654. The Hague, 1879.

authority, of Messrs. Vreede, Fruin, and many others, not omitting M. de Parien among Frenchmen.

Fresh researches and unpublished documents may confer some interest on the present work, which has been for many years in preparation with the aid of much valued assistance. It was composed in the Library and Archive Office at the Hague, thanks to the obliging help of the learned Director of the Royal Library, M. Campbell; of the Deputy-Keeper of the Archives, M. de Jonge, who was prematurely called from his work; and one of his most distinguished assistants, M. Haigman. It is by studying the public and private correspondence of the Grand Pensionary year by year, that his history can be most faithfully written.

Another source of information has been applied to with no less success, that of the family papers and records, freely communicated both by M. Hoeufft van Velsen and by Messrs. van Sypestyn, of whom only one now survives, but who both acquired for themselves honourable notoriety by their writings and researches. On this point no help could be more valuable than that obtained from the last lineal descendants of the Grand Pensionary, the venerable Madame Hoog and her son M. Hoog, whose important inherited collection has lately been in part acquired by the Royal Archives.

The collections at the Hague were supplemented by those of London and Paris, and notably by that at the French Foreign Office, whose inexhaustible treasures have been largely made use of. The author has had the good fortune to be able to add to these the archives of Chantilly, which were thrown open to him by the gracious kindness of Monseigneur the Duke d'Aumale, and which have enabled him to study in the correspondence of the great Condé the history

of the preparation and conduct of the war with Holland in 1672.

Something more than historical interest may be found in this work; political instruction may, perhaps, be gathered from it. During the laborious years of his ministry, John de Witt succeeded in the difficult task he had undertaken. In the end he succumbed to it. The success and the downfall of his labours are equally instructive. The services which he so gloriously rendered to his country are sufficient to prove that the prolonged duration of power, worthily exercised by a great minister, is the best guarantee for the liberty and prosperity of a republic. On the other hand, the public calamities, under the weight of which he succumbed, demonstrate with equal clearness that a nation, whose independence is menaced by conquest, cannot defend itself better than by placing itself under the guardianship of an ancient dynasty.

LEFÈVRE PONTALIS.

Boissy: *November* 1883.

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JOHN DE WITT.

CHAPTER I.

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED PROVINCES—THE FAILURE OF A COUP D'ÉTAT—PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

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In the middle of the seventeenth century the Seven United Provinces had achieved the glorious and sanguinary conquest of their independence, and, detached from the Spanish monarchy, were constituted by the Union of Utrecht into a Republic, uniting in the bond of a confederation destined for

the common defence Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelders, Overyssel, Friesland, and Groningen. For many years the victim, of religious persecutions and political proscriptions, they had at last forced their ancient sovereigns, the kings of Spain, to acknowledge themselves vanquished by those whom, until now, they had treated as rebels. Mistress of herself, the Republic assumed as her emblem a lion amidst the waves, as a just homage to the indomitable valour of her people, with the proud motto, expressive both of her trials and her hopes : '*I struggle, but I overcome.*'

The nation which had thus freed itself, and had won the name of the Country of the Netherlands, had inherited as its birthright one dominant passion, the love of liberty. Descended from the most heroic of the German tribes, her ancestors were those Batavians and Frisians who opposed a constantly renewed hostility to the Roman dominion, and who, in the reign of Vespasian, had held in check the imperial legions. Her independence once regained, she had preserved it intact, and even Charlemagne had been forced to respect it. During the whole of the middle ages the men who in later times were to find a common country in the Republic of the United Provinces kept up an unceasing contest with their feudal superiors, to win from them the recognition of their rights.

On the accession of the House of Burgundy they entered upon a determined struggle for the maintenance of these rights. Associated as they were with the destinies of the Belgian Low Countries, and incorporated into the domains of Burgundy with the wealthy inhabitants of Brabant and Flanders, they offered energetic opposition to the arbitrary and tyrannical government which their new sovereigns claimed the right to exercise. So early as the fifteenth century they obtained from the Duchess Mary the Great Charter, or Great Privilege, which, by giving them deliberative assemblies for the voting of taxes, and town councils possessing municipal freedom, guaranteed their political liberty.

The Reformation in the sixteenth century put in peril these acquired benefits and soon provoked the implacable furies

of religious tyranny. The Low Countries were transformed into a blood-stained arena, and Charles V., impatient to crush the rising revolt of conscience, gave the first and as yet feeble signal for persecution. Some victims had already been made when he was succeeded by his son, Philip II. On taking possession of the inheritance of his fathers, Philip assumed to himself the task of imposing upon his States unity of faith, and the will of one masetr; he determined utterly to crush both heresy and the power of the Assemblies, being resolved to endure no obstacle to his rule. After ten years of a reign which had not yet exhausted the loyal obedience of his subjects in the Low Countries, he replied to their remonstrances by addressing to his sister, the Regent Margaret of Parma, his definite resolution 'not to grant one of the alterations for which they petitioned, whether in matters of government or of religion.' He refused to convoke the States, that he might continue to levy taxes at his pleasure, and would not restrain the powers of the Inquisition, so that he might more surely count upon the extermination of heretics. When the letters of the King of Spain were read at Brussels in the Council, William, Prince of Orange, stadtholder or lieutenant of Philip II. in Holland and Zealand, left the hall, saying, 'Now we shall see the beginning of a great tragedy.' He was not mistaken. The tragedy was heroic in its action and lasted eighty years.

The first signal was given by the great lords of the country. One of the councillors of the Duchess of Parma having spoken of them as beggars (*gueux*), they proudly assumed the title which had been flung at them in scorn. At a banquet given in Brussels, at Cuylemburg House, one of their number, Brederode, the gayest of all present and a descendant of the ancient Counts of Holland, beckoned to his page, who handed to him a leathern wallet, such as beggars then carried, and a large wooden bowl, which also formed part of their usual equipment. Brederode took the wallet, filled the bowl with wine and emptied it at one draught, crying as he replaced it on the table, 'Long life to the Beggars!' And thus among a gathering of nobles excited by

wine, and met together for pleasure, there arose the cry which was soon to resound over land and sea and to create a free country.

The party of resistance seemed, however, to be in a desperate condition, and the brutal fury of the iconoclasts who were devastating the Catholic cathedrals could but hasten its destruction. Freedom was to be bought only at the cost of the martyrdom of a nation. Before two years were over, the Duke of Alva was sent into the Low Countries with an army of 10,000 picked veterans. When he had covered the country with scaffolds, with gibbets and stakes, sparing neither the most illustrious nor the most obscure victims, he believed that he had succeeded in his mission, and wrote to Philip II., amidst the cries of agony of a whole nation: 'There is no country in the world more easy than this to govern, if one knows how to rule it.' To rule was to massacre.

On February 16, 1568, by a decree of the Inquisition, all the inhabitants of the Low Countries were condemned to death as heretics. A few persons mentioned by name were alone excepted. Ten days later a royal proclamation confirmed the sentence of the Inquisition, and ordered that it should be put in force without distinction of sex, age, or rank. The lives of 3,000,000 human beings, men, women, and children, were disposed of thus at one stroke.

But an oppressed nation is like a great river checked in its course by the frosts of winter. So long as the sky is darkened and the sun shines with only a feeble light, you may cross it safely and trample it under foot as if it were paved with stone. But suddenly a sound is heard of cracking, both deep and dangerous, and the stream, awakened and revived by the beams of a spring day, parts asunder the blocks of ice which imprisoned it, breaks its fetters, and resumes its course with the irresistible impetus of recovered freedom.

Deliverance came, as it commonly does, from the quarter whence it had seemed impossible to look for it. Elizabeth of England, whose interest lay in conciliating Philip II., repulsed from her ports some refugees who had sought shelter there. Two hundred and fifty 'sea-beggars,' as they called them-

selves, under the command of the famous William de la Marck, put to sea, famished and anxious to re-victual their ships. Storm-tossed and repulsed from every shore, these men had no country but what they could make theirs by conquest. The tempest having stranded them at the mouth of the Meuse, they seized the fortress of Brill; and this city of refuge, occupied by outlaws, became the cradle of a new State destined one day to be the guardian of the balance of power in Europe.

The capture of Brill took place on April 1, 1572; the wealthy towns in the neighbourhood at once surrendered or were seized, and a week later Rotterdam declared itself independent. The cause was no longer that of a handful of desperate men, but the rising of a nation. The States of Holland assembled at Dordrecht, July 15, 1572, and appealed to William of Orange, while Guelders, Overyssel, Utrecht, and Friesland yielded simultaneously to the impulse of patriotic revolt. The arrival of a body of 15,000 French troops under the command of Coligny was already announced. But, instead of this expected succour, the defection of France, made still more sinister by the massacre of St. Bartholomew, annihilated the hopes of the Prince of Orange. Proof against discouragement, however, and full of courageous resignation, he wrote to his brother, John of Nassau, 'I am determined by God's grace to maintain myself in Holland and Zealand, and to make my grave there.'

From this moment the Spanish monarchy lost hold of its prey and never recovered it. The pecuniary exactions of the Duke of Alva added to the horror caused by his persecutions, and secured to the party of revolt the support of the small traders, besides uniting Catholics and Protestants against a common enemy. The latter exhausted itself in sieges, and weltered in the blood of whole provinces. But the siege of the town of Alkmaar, defended by 800 soldiers and 1,300 citizens, and the indomitable resistance of Leyden set bounds to the successes of Spain. The breaking down of the dykes, behind which a whole nation was gathered in arms, forced the Spaniards to retire under penalty of drowning. When the Duke of Alva, who boasted of having caused 18,000

persons to be executed during his government, returned to Spain in 1573, his successors found it impossible to undo the work of liberation.

They persisted in the struggle, but it was beyond their powers. The last victories which Spain succeeded in gaining,[1] remained barren, and when Philip II. in his discouragement decided to recall the Duke of Alva, the gulf which had been opened between the oppressors and the oppressed could no longer be closed. Requesens, notwithstanding his temporisings and his apparent moderation; Don John, the victor of Lepanto, in spite of the prestige of his fame, the seduction of his promises of pardon, and his successful feats of war; Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, with his military genius and great diplomatic abilities, all disappeared in a few years, like figures in a pageant. Four generations of soldiers were exhausted by them, and the Spanish dominion came to an end. The Union of Utrecht was formed in 1579 between the seven provinces which, having declared for the reformed doctrines of Calvin, had to guard both their religious and their political liberty. Two years later the rupture with Philip II., which until then had remained doubtful, was finally accomplished by the deposition of the King of Spain and the proclamation of a federal republic. Henceforth the successors of Charles V. were never again to bring under their yoke the subjects who had set themselves free; a new nation, which would neither die nor live as slaves, had sprung into life.

The whole seventeen provinces of the Low Countries, both Catholic and Protestant, drawn together by the wise tolerance of the Prince of Orange, had all but united in one independent State, notwithstanding the differences of religion. The pacification of Ghent in 1576 seemed to have joined them in one league; but the skilful negotiations of the Duke of Parma reconciled to Spain the Walloon provinces, Artois and Hainault, while at the same time jealousies and internal discords destroyed the work that had been begun. The assassination of the Prince of Orange and the taking of Antwerp by the Duke of Parma

[1] At Mook, under Requesens; at Gembloux, under Don John.

were irreparable blows to the Union; and the hesitating policy of Henry III. of France, who could not make up his mind to accept the sovereignty of the Low Countries either for himself or for his brother the Duke of Anjou, the equivocal assistance given to the United Provinces by Queen Elizabeth, and the disorderly administration and arbitrary rule of her envoy, the Earl of Leicester, culminating in his audacious attempts at usurpation of power, all combined to restore the southern provinces of the Low Countries to the rule of their former masters.

Spain was none the less reduced to act on the defensive. The diversion attempted by Philip II. against England, followed by the destruction of the Invincible Armada and his intervention in the civil wars of France on the side of the League, diminished his forces in the Low Countries. He could no longer prevent the capture of fortresses of which he had until now retained possession, such as Nimeguen in 1590 and Groningen in 1594, by Maurice of Orange, the son of William I. The independence of the United Provinces was established beyond all danger by the alliance concluded with Henry IV., and renewed with Elizabeth in 1596, and the twelve years' truce from 1609 to 1620 would have ended all hostilities if it had not been the interest of France that they should be resumed in order that she might be secure of a powerful ally against Spain, with whom she was still at war.

During twenty-seven years after the termination of the truce, the possession of Brabant was disputed between Spain and the United Provinces in a series of sieges which shed lustre on the military science of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, and of the Spanish general Spinoa, but which did not rekindle the former animosity between the belligerent parties. The battle of Rocroy brought this state of things to an end. Defeated and crushed by France at Rocroy in 1643, exhausted by the expenses of a war which in the last eighty years had cost her nearly eighty millions, fearing to lose the provinces which still remained to her, and finally relinquishing the hope of reconquering those she had lost, Spain was ready to demand peace at any price, and con-

sidered herself fortunate in disarming the United Provinces by recognising them in the treaty of Munster in 1648 as a free and sovereign State.

The little republic had vanquished the great empire. In all respects the victory was astonishing. On one side we have the Spanish monarchy, of which the Atlantic and Mediterranean alike seemed tributary waters, enjoying a favoured climate and fertile soil, boasting of splendid and populous towns—Madrid, Cadiz, Granada, Toledo, Valladolid, and the recently conquered Lisbon; mistress of Sicily, Lombardy, and Flanders; whose domains had been extended by Christopher Columbus to the confines of a new world of which the riches seemed inexhaustible; ruling a third part of the known world, so that the sun never set upon her dominions, and having at her disposal the greatest soldiers of the day, the finest infantry in Europe, the best equipped and most numerous fleet both mercantile and royal. On the other side, to support the burden of resistance to Spain, we see Holland, a little province half submerged in the sea, consisting in part of sands and marshes. It is not man here who has sprung from the earth, but the earth which has been created by man, formed by his labour, and conquered from the ocean by the formation of dykes, the enormous task of whose construction gives some measure of the laborious industry and the indefatigable vigilance of this people. The soil of Holland consists only of 100,000 acres of cultivable ground, which if sown with wheat would not yield more than a couple of pounds of bread for each inhabitant. Her population, which in less than half a century was to double itself, amounted to barely 1,240,000 souls at the beginning of the war of independence. She was governed almost entirely by traders and artisans, and could expect but little help from the other provinces with which she had made common cause. But she found in herself all that was needed; statesmen, captains, soldiers, a whole generation of citizens to whom no sacrifice was too great by which they might win and retain their liberty, and who transformed their land conquered from the sea into the rock against which the colossus of Spain was to be broken.

Amidst the fogs and marshes of this country of lagoons, the spectacle of the ancient resistance of Greece to the all-powerful monarchy of the Kings of Persia, and of the more recent struggle of Switzerland against the Archdukes of Austria and the Dukes of Burgundy, had thus been revived with similar determination and similar success. The United Provinces in their stand against the Kings of Spain had proved once more that the safety of a nation does not always depend upon the number of men it can muster in arms, but upon the courage with which it holds its own and the confidence it places in the goodness and justice of a great cause.

The little new-born republic soon took her place amongst the greatest States of Europe by means of the rapid development of her riches; and she deserved all that she gained. She turned to profit the weakness of the great kingdoms which, exhausted like Spain by the Continental wars and the divisions of a falling monarchy, enfeebled like France by the discords of the Fronde, or convulsed like England by the shock of a revolution, had no longer either trade or ships. She became the Phœnicia of modern days. Having possessed themselves of the Scheldt, the United Provinces could close the outlets of Antwerp, and thus inherit the commercial greatness of that wealthy city, which a Venetian ambassador of the fifteenth century had compared to Venice. They welcomed also into their principal towns the artisan population of the Low Countries, who fled from the tyranny which Spain attempted to exercise over their consciences. The woollen goods, the tapestries and embroideries of Groningen, Friesland, and Overyssel, became as much sought after as had been those of Tournay, Ypres, Brussels, and Valenciennes. The manufacture of cloth, linen, and stuffs, which gave employment to 600,000 of the inhabitants of Holland, opened new sources of labour and profit in the future to a people who had hitherto been content with the trade in cheese and salt fish. The fisheries had indeed already sufficed to enrich them. Nearly a fifth of the population of Holland lived upon the proceeds of fishing, particularly upon the herring-fishery.

Three hundred thousand barrels of salt fish were annually produced, returning to Holland alone more than 320,000*l.* The fisheries were more lucrative than the silver and gold mines discovered by Spain in the New World, and in popular parlance Amsterdam, the wealthiest city of the United Provinces, 'was built upon herrings.'

The maritime and commercial greatness of the republic developed rapidly. The mercantile marine of Holland alone mustered 10,000 sail and 168,000 sailors, and gave the means of livelihood to 260,000 souls. Thus was held in reserve a naval militia full of courage and confidence, and the peaceable dominion of the seas was secured to the United Provinces. They had monopolised the greater part of the trade of Europe, had added to it since the peace the entire transport of merchandise between America and Spain, had in their hands the service of the French ports, and maintained an import trade valued at thirty-six millions. In the northern countries, Brandenburg, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Muscovy, access to which was given by the Baltic to the United Provinces, they found an inexhaustible market for their exports; importing in return the products which they required—namely, wheat, wood, iron, copper, hemp, and furs. Thirty millions of capital were engaged in the Baltic carrying trade, and the total value of the goods shipped each year in Dutch vessels on all seas exceeded forty millions sterling. 'The Dutch,' according to the saying of a contemporary, 'had made themselves the common carriers of the world.'

It was by means of her colonies that the republic had been enabled to give so great a development to her maritime commerce. She had the monopoly of all Eastern products. The richest countries of Asia had become her purveyors, and furnished her with the provisions and spices with which she in turn supplied Europe to the value of 700,000*l.* or 800,000*l.* annually. The powerful East India Company, which was founded at Amsterdam in 1602 with a capital not exceeding six and a half millions of florins, had founded in Asia an empire composed of possessions conquered from the Portuguese. In 1650, being mistress of the Cape of Good

Hope and thus secure of a harbour for her ships, she reigned supreme at Ceylon and on the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel. She had founded a seat of government at Batavia, in the wealthy island of Java, and had extended her trade as far as China and Japan. Meanwhile the West India Company, whose fortunes were more rapid but less secure, had fitted out 800 vessels for war or trade, and had made use of them to appropriate the fragments remaining of the Portuguese dominions on the coast of Guinea and in Brazil, that 'land of gold and diamonds,' of which the greater part had been brought under her rule.

The republic of the United Provinces had thus become the general mart of exchange for all nations. 'Its inhabitants,' wrote a contemporary author, 'sucked honey, like the bee, from all parts. Norway has been called their forest; the banks of the Rhine, the Garonne, and the Dordogne, their vineyards; Germany, Spain, and Ireland, their grazing lands; Prussia and Poland their granaries; India and Arabia their gardens.' The various parts of the world seemed thus to be their tributaries.

Holland was the true sovereign of the Confederation. She had profited by her almost insular position on the shores of the ocean, at the mouths of great rivers, and sheltered at the extremity of a gulf, to take the first place amongst the seven confederated provinces. Amsterdam, called by a French ambassador 'the great bell of Holland,' lent money to sovereigns, and treated with them on equal terms; her bank, founded in 1609, had become as it were the metropolis of the trade of the world; her artisan population counted not less than 54,000 workers. The great city, with its streets intersected by vast docks bordered by spacious quays under the shelter of avenues of trees, its long lines of walls, its sumptuous edifices, its wealthy mansions with their flights of marble steps, its hospitals testifying to thoughtful humanity, caused some envy even to the subjects of Louis XIV.

To the beauty and riches of her other towns, the Hague, Dordrecht, Delft, Leyden, Haarlem, and Rotterdam, Holland added also the charms of a landscape enlivened by green

fields where numerous flocks and herds found pasture, crossed by canals which served for high roads, and dotted with windmills in constant movement, like 'a scene on the stage some twenty miles long.'[1] For decorations she had gardens of herbs and flowers, the cultivation of which was the favourite occupation of her inhabitants. The prosperity and comfort of the people, with the small number of really poor, who, by the abundance of work and the readiness of assistance, were spared the misery then so common, completed the holiday appearance of this republic of traders, who had been freed by war and enriched and made famous by the arts of peace.

Prosperity and freedom combined had been for the United Provinces the signal of a sudden blossoming of arts, science, and letters. Beside their almost legendary heroes, William the Silent, Count Egmont, Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde; beside their statesmen, their diplomatists, their great warriors, their captains and admirals, they found place for an illustrious group of painters, poets, and prose-writers. They could boast of having seen in the brief period of one half-century the birth and development of that great and prolific school of Dutch painters, worthy of being named as rivals to the great masters of Flanders, Germany, and Italy. These painters did not indeed strive after the ideal; the change of faith had closed to them the great source of religious inspiration by establishing in the United Provinces a form of worship without images. They paid no heed even to what was passing around them, and only as rare exceptions ever reproduced the great scenes of contemporary history. Nature and mankind were sufficient for their studies, and the Dutch school limited the work of art to the representation of these subjects, with all the fidelity and perfection of its drawing and all the wealth of its colouring. Nothing escapes it; landscape, cattle, shipping, seas and canals, streets, houses, booths, people of all conditions, from men of wealth and leisure to the humblest and most ill-favoured of fortune, municipalities with their banquets and their business, all live again on its canvas, the exact and speaking likeness of the country without the

[1] *Mémoire de Hollande*, p. 82, par Madame De La Fayette.

smallest attempt at embellishment. We have Paul Potter, who at twenty-three years of age painted his masterpiece, the famous Bull; Bakhuisen and Van de Velde, with their sea-pieces; Wouvermans, Hobbema, and the greatest of landscape painters, Ruysdael, who, painting by the light of his own sentiment, with natural and touching simplicity, has made use of the temperate and subdued rays of a northern sun to illuminate the sober scenes which he delineates, and to lend them a charm peculiar to himself. To these may be added the most admirable portrait painters: Netscher, Terburg, Metzu, Mieris, Van der Helst, Franz Hals the most refined and life-like of all; besides Van Ostade and Jan Steen, the faithful and sometimes bold delineators of popular life in its minutest details; Gerard Dow, whose most homely pictures of interiors are finished to the highest point and even touched with pathos; Cuyp, whose works form a complete representation of Holland in the seventeenth century; and above them all, throned in solitary grandeur, Rembrandt, great thinker as well as great painter, whose life and works alike offer the contrast of bright lights and heavy shadows, and who can be compared to no other whether for greatness of inspiration or for originality of genius, being without a rival in his glory.

In the other domains of art all the faculties of the mind were equally on the alert. Vondel,[1] the reformer and almost creator of Dutch poetry, which owes to him its purity and marked simplicity, was the first dramatist of his country and deserved the name of the Dutch Corneille; Cats, statesman and poet, charmed his contemporaries by the facile verses in which unstudied elegance perhaps supplied the place of the true poetic inspiration. The revolution which had established the national independence found its historian in Hooft; and Wicquefort, afterwards to become historiographer to the States of Holland, was busy with his great work which he completed under persecution, and to which his learned volumes on the functions of an ambassador are a supplement. Grotius, equally renowned for his merits as a statesman and for his talents as a writer and jurisconsult, called by one of his

[1] He died in 1679, aged 91 years.

contemporaries 'the man of most universal knowledge that the world has seen since Aristotle,' and who fell a victim to the resentment of the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, was now being eagerly courted both by Sweden and France, and was to bequeath to posterity, in his treatise on the rights of peace and war, a complete code of the diplomacy of his time. Spinoza was there, staggered by no problem of philosophy, and himself putting forth the boldest speculations. Finally, Descartes, who had gone through the war of independence as a volunteer, gave to the United Provinces their highest literary distinction by settling himself there to complete his immortal works; it was in the shade of the woods at the Hague that he uttered the axiom of the new philosophy which in itself resumed the thought of the whole century: 'I think, therefore I am.'

Neither was Protestant theology inactive. Arminius and Gomar had renewed the controversy upon Grace and Free-will; the new doctors, Voetius and Cocceius, both chiefs of opposing sects, gathered round them numerous disciples. The Cartesian philosophy, defended by one party and attacked by the other, had divided them into two hostile camps.

The study of antiquity was awakening the taste for imitation of the Roman writers and poets. Barlaeus, Heinsius, Justus Lipsius, and Scaliger had opened new paths for learning. Isaac Vossius, who corresponded with St. Evremont, lived in familiar intercourse with Hebrew, Greek, and Latin literature; and new editions of Virgil and Horace did honour to the learning of Heinsius. At Amsterdam Louis Elzevir acquired a celebrity, which still endures, by the typographical perfection of the works which he sent out from his printing presses. At the same time a long course of military renown had caused the United Provinces to be considered as a school for the formation of soldiers and commanders. Many strangers came during the last campaigns of Frederick Henry to learn the art of siege and defence; and the study of strategy and the art of fortification gave scope to the talents of military engineers such as Ruze, and Cohorn the Vauban of Holland. The necessities of navigation encouraged the

study of geography, and the maps of the bookseller Jan Blaes, sheriff of Amsterdam, were sought for in all parts of Europe. Mathematical and natural sciences were not behindhand. Huyghens, one of the most learned men of the day, had won renown by his geometrical studies, his discoveries in mechanics, and his astronomical observations, to which Louis XIV. himself awarded formal recognition. Nature herself seemed to have opened her secrets to the penetration of Zwammerdam and Graaff. Zwammerdam applied the microscope to the observation of insects, that he might study their metamorphoses. Graaff made use of anatomy to establish the law of the development of germs and the mysteries of human generation. Inventors were not lacking either. A bell-founder named Hermong discovered a combination of metals which enabled him to cast bells with a tone as soft as that of an organ, so that people went to hear the chimes as they might have gone to listen to music. A Frenchman named Dessons, established at Rotterdam, exhibited there to the French ambassador, Chanut, a vessel with paddle-wheels which he had constructed to be sent to sea without sails, oars, or ropes, and which he boasted would make fifteen miles an hour. 'He had,' he said, 'preferred to try the experiment of it in a free country, which could appreciate this sort of work, rather than to attempt it in France, where the civil wars had destroyed the taste that would formerly have delighted in such curiosities.' It seems as if the discovery of steam was nearly anticipated by a century and a half.

Thus it will be seen that the republic of the United Provinces took an active part in the intellectual movement encouraged by the brilliant example of France, and followed it with ever-increasing emulation. In the universities of Leyden, Groningen, and Utrecht, renowned for the lectures of the most eminent professors, in the gymnasium of Amsterdam and the Latin school of Dordrecht, were collected many and serious students in the various branches of knowledge. The university, demanded and obtained by the town of Leyden in recompense for her defence against Spain, counted 2,000 students, and had in a very short time acquired European

celebrity. Twenty-two years after its foundation, Henry IV. of France, in his treaty of alliance with the United Provinces, declared, as a proof of his gratitude to the States-General for the aid they had given him against Spain, that all academic diplomas given by the professors of the university of Leyden should henceforth be accepted in France, and that the degrees of her graduates should also be recognised. At Dordrecht, literary assemblies formed a part of the every-day habits of society; young and beautiful women of cultivated minds and refined sentiments there met and distinguished themselves by their poetical essays and their more serious studies, as if to rival the most illustrious Frenchwomen of their day; and this distant reflection of the splendour which illumined the Hôtel Rambouillet gave a stamp of elegance to the society of a mercantile community which riches could never have bestowed.

Independent of external influences, and enjoying the benefits of a civilisation fertile in resources and fruitful of glory, the people of the United Provinces had remained faithful to those traditions of simplicity and virtue which make nations free or worthy to become so. 'Although they are far removed from the ancient parsimony of their fathers, they still retain some of that moderation which is so rarely to be found with wealth. Great frugality at table, a small number of servants, sobriety in dress and furniture, little ambition to raise themselves above the rank of traders, the unpaid character of most public offices, which are rather indemnified than salaried; finally, the spirit of the popular assemblies, which place on a comparative equality all who form part of them—all these things combine to keep together riches which would soon be squandered in the luxury of Courts, with the desire of advancement inseparable from those who live under a monarchy.' This testimony from the Marquis de Pomponne, ambassador from the King of France to the Hague, and one of the advisers of the war declared afterwards by Louis XIV. against the United Provinces, is that of a judge as competent as he was impartial.

Luxury, that evil accompaniment of wealth, had not yet

spoiled the old simplicity of manners. The people of the United Provinces avoided all appearance of splendour in the exterior of their houses, which, however, within were handsomely furnished and kept with the most scrupulous care. They treated their own persons as they did their houses, and took no part in the extravagances of French and English dress of that period, which only provoked their amazement. 'Everything is topsy-turvy in France,' we read in their accounts of travel; 'the women are like men and the men like women. The women are queens in their households, and rule everything. The men usurp the coquetry, the elegance and splendour of dress of the women. The latter take pains to look pale, and all seem to have the ague; to improve their appearance, they wear patches and powder on their cheeks. They sprinkle their hair with flour, which makes their heads white, and surround themselves with hoops from casks, which they call *vertugadins*, and which give them a very dignified appearance. The men even in frosty weather appear in their shirt-sleeves, with chests uncovered, their cuffs hanging below their sleeves; they are always booted and spurred as if for riding, and for the rest of their dress are generally in red like cardinals.'[1] 'They wear round their legs hoops, which they call "canons," as if to caricature the women who wear them round their persons, and these are made so horribly and monstrously large that the wearers are quite hampered and unable to walk straight. The rest of their clothes are of such a mixture of colours that they look like artists' palettes; they cover them with lace and costly embroideries, and wear plumes as long as a fox's brush, and on their heads a second artificial head, which is called a wig. Such is the dress that I must wear to be in the fashion here, where everything is exaggerated, according to French taste.'[2]

As to English society, the French ambassador in London a few years later, in the reign of Charles II., giving, in one of his despatches, an account of the scenes which pass before

[1] A contemporary letter on the French fashions in 1603, published by Monsieur Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin der seventiende Eeuw*, 1868.

[2] *Diary of a Journey*, Paris, 1657–58, published by M. Faugère, 1832.

him, writes what would certainly shock the modern Englishwoman, 'If I had the means of living in this country, I could amuse myself here better than some people. The ladies of the Court do not displease me at all. I can no longer endure Madame Desbordes' shoes; there are none so neat as the English, fitting the foot well, with very neat silk stockings and short petticoats. The Englishwomen are not at all shy of showing their legs, and I have often seen some worthy of being painted. Green silk stockings are the fashion, and black velvet garters are worn fastened below the knee with diamond buckles; where the silk stocking is wanting, the skin is white and smooth as satin.' The inhabitants of the United Provinces did not allow themselves to be carried away by the taste for frivolous expense of which the subjects of Louis XIV., and afterwards of Charles II., set them the example. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there were no coaches to be seen excepting at the Hague and one at Amsterdam. In 1610 the first coach was seen at Dordrecht.[1] By an edict of the city of Amsterdam, which still remained in force, it was forbidden to a bridegroom to present his wife with jewels of a value exceeding the twentieth part of his fortune.[2] A clergyman with a salary of 500 florins was content to supply his wardrobe with a coat once in two years and a cloak once in ten.[3] The chief personages of the State preserved faithfully their old habits of economy. Some young Dutchmen visiting Paris relate that at their reception by the ambassador of the States-General 'they were regaled after the Dutch fashion, with beer, cheese, and butter, all served in china dishes and very suggestive of Amsterdam.'

Amongst other witnesses, the French writers Gourville and Saint-Evremont bear testimony to the primitive condition in which Dutch customs remained. 'M. de Lionne having asked me why the Dutch are so wealthy,' writes Gourville, who had long lived away from France after the fall of Fouquet,' I told him that this was the result of their

[1] Schotel, *Oude Zeden en gebruiken in Nederland*, 1859, p. 26.
[2] Veegens, *Notice sur Wendela Bicker.*
[3] Schotel, *Oude Zeden*, &c., p. 75.

commerce, and still more of their economy. I informed him that in good houses meat was hardly ever eaten; at the most it was only smoked beef, lightly scraped and spread upon slices of bread and butter, and that everybody as a rule drank beer.' Saint-Evremont, when obliged during his exile to leave England and return to Holland on account of his health, complained bitterly as a man of pleasure of the dulness of his stay in the United Provinces. 'I had still,' he writes, 'five or six years in which to enjoy music, the theatre, and good cheer, and now I must content myself with orderly living and frugal fare, and get what poor amusement I can from a contemplation of Dutch virtue.' All entertainments, however, were not unknown. Balls, which in Paris were often deserted in favour of gaming, were frequent in the society of the Hague; but they were never made an occasion for show, and were simply meetings for pleasure with no attraction of intrigue. The most frequent entertainments were those given by the Corporations. The ward banquets, of which some curious reports have been preserved, lasted for several days, and were the occasion of various amusements. They were enlivened by music and shows, and so far was any idea of excess at table from these assemblies, that every young man was bound, under penalty of a fine, to bring with him some young woman, and wives and children came with their husbands and fathers. While the men smoked, the women drank tea, which a contemporary narrative calls 'the ladies' pipe.'

In this school of manners conjugal fidelity was preserved, and domestic scandals so frequent elsewhere were avoided. The Dutchwomen were remarkable for their beauty and the vigour of their constitutions. Accustomed from childhood to the greatest freedom, they had acquired more open and unreserved manners than the women of other countries, while at the same time their conduct was irreproachable. The young girls were left free to please themselves in their marriage engagements, and, once married, they contented themselves with the authority left to them in their own houses, and had no desire for anything beyond their domestic attach-

ments. 'It is not that there are not some very charming ones amongst them,' writes Saint-Evremont again, with the licentious recklessness habitual to him, 'but there is nothing to hope from them, be it from prudence or from a coldness which serves them as a safeguard. Whatever the cause may be, there is a certain habitual prudence universally established here, and a sort of ancient tradition of continence which is handed down from mother to daughter almost like a religion.'

In the matter of the education of children, paternal authority and solicitude were alike noteworthy. A father writes to his son: 'When you write to me, you should sign, "Your most dutiful son and very humble servant," for it is always proper to humble yourself before your parents.' This severe etiquette, which extended to the most intimate relations and caused even brothers to write to each other as 'Sir,' made the fathers of families especially careful of their duties. In those burgher families which handed down from one generation to another as a duty and an honour the guidance of public affairs, the parents had an interest in preparing the future of those who were to succeed to their offices, and they accordingly superintended the education of their sons with most vigilant care, supplying the want of fortune, if needful, by the sacrifices which they imposed upon themselves with that object. They brought them up to love work, and spared them neither good example nor good advice. The letters written to his son by the father of a young man destined to play a great part in the affairs of his country, Jerome de Beverningh, are a model of the domestic correspondence of the day. 'I wish you,' he wrote, when his son was only sixteen, 'to lose not the smallest particle of time, for, in order that you should become at all a distinguished man, nothing is more necessary to consider than the careful disposal of your days. I am constantly occupied about you and your studies, and I could wish that your application in reading and re-reading the best authors were equal to my care. The more you know, the more you will wish to know; it is only after having read a good author two, three, or even four times, that you can completely appreciate his charm. If you rule your

conduct according to my directions in this letter, and I hear a good report of you accordingly, my affection for you will be increased, and I will let you want for nothing which can be of service to you, as your good father.'

He desired him to be in no haste to leave the Latin school for the university of Leyden. 'You may take it as an incontrovertible fact,' he writes to him, 'that the more advanced studies afford no knowledge to those who have not already worked hard, and who do not begin by learning to walk before they attempt to run. You must not be one of those of whom the professors say: *Accipiamus pecuniam et admittamus asinum.* Besides, living is dear at Leyden, and whatever I set apart for your expenses I must economise at the cost of your sisters, which I would not do did I not expect a great deal from you.' The height of the paternal ambition betrays itself in another letter written for the encouragement of the young scholar, on a day when he had to deliver an oration before his masters and fellow-students. 'I hope,' writes the father, 'that you will acquit yourself creditably; spare neither pains nor labour. Keep in mind that I shall know what ability you have shown under the circumstances, and remember how agreeable to me it will be that you should receive praise. Consider that this is your first public action. Who knows for what ends the Lord may have decreed your birth?' Happy are those who have had such gentle and loving counsel from the good advisers of their life; still happier those who, like the young man to whom these letters were addressed, have known how to profit by it!

The family feeling, which attained almost to the height of a religious sentiment, was encouraged by the habits of a sedentary life. In one of the pictures of the day two women are sitting together; the old mother is listening while the younger one reads the Bible, and between them is an infant asleep in its cradle. The father is absent, but you see his place kept for him by the hearth, and his return is expected as a matter of course. Looking at these walls, so simply and unpretendingly decorated, and lighted by the blazing hearth, one may surely say: Happiness is here.

The liberties enjoyed by the United Provinces contributed no less than their domestic habits to the felicity of the people. Religious beliefs were not troubled by the oppressive Protestant rule which, alike under Cromwell's republic and after the restoration of Charles II., ceased not to prevail in England. Neither the war with Spain nor the recollection of the persecutions exercised by Philip II. had hindered the founder of their independence, William I., from respecting the rights of Catholics. Notwithstanding the intolerant fanaticism of the principal sectaries of the reformed religion, he had steadily pursued his object of religious liberty. Having himself changed from an almost indifferent Catholic to a fervent Protestant, he was determined not to allow his former co-religionists to be disturbed in their beliefs.

The requirements of Protestant orthodoxy, however, were still asserted in an imperious and vexatious fashion. Thus, the Grand Pensionary, De Witt, was commissioned by the States-General to call to account the envoy of the republic in Poland for his presence at some Catholic ceremonies which had accompanied the coronation of the Queen, and at the mass which was supposed to have been celebrated. He did not conceal from him 'the displeasure that would be felt by the States should they learn that he had taken part by kneeling or uncovering his head, or by giving any mark of respect, at the risk of causing scandal to those of the reformed religion in this country.' Religious toleration, of which the French Government, still faithful to the promises of the Edict of Nantes, set the praiseworthy example, left much to be desired in the United Provinces. While there might be seen in France five Protestant Marshals—viz. La Force, Châtillon, Gassion, Rantzau, and Turenne—the Catholics of the United Provinces were excluded from all public offices, even from municipal functions. The free exercise of their own form of worship even was subjected to numerous restrictions. They might not have any bishops, and for churches were forced to content themselves with private houses, undistinguished by any external sign, some of which remain to this day. If they had mass celebrated in their own houses, as the ambassadors

of the Catholic Powers were used to do, they might not admit any persons not belonging to their household.

It is true that the ordinances to be found in the register were seldom put in execution. 'In the larger towns of Holland, with the exception of Leyden,' writes the French ambassador, Chanut, 'mass is openly said, and the authorities wink at it, for payment of a small subsidy.' At Amsterdam, the magistrates of the town restored a church to the Catholics, who were numerous[1] there, thus recognising the open exercise of their religion; and Louis XIV., to whose intercession this satisfaction had been accorded, thanked in consequence 'his very dear and good friends the magistrates of Amsterdam.' The States of Holland, more tolerant than those of the other provinces, seemed disposed even to employ Catholics in their service, and would have been ready to say of those who served them what was said afterwards of himself by Count Tilly, when an officer in their army. 'If the heart is Papist the sword is Protestant.' 'The Catholics in these provinces,' writes again a French ambassador, 'have never enjoyed so much liberty, and I exhort them, so far as it is in my power, to use it with discretion and self-control, that they may preserve it.' As to the Jews, their active share in the commerce of the country, which made their services appreciated, protected them against all ill-usage; far from being harassed, they were allowed free use of their synagogues. Although there was but one dominant religion in the republic—namely, the Calvinistic, whose churches were supported, clergy paid, and their expenses assured by the State, religious liberty was thus becoming acclimatised on the soil of the United Provinces, and was firmly striking root there. Respect for the rights of conscience might not have sufficed to secure its recognition, but it was protected by reason of public utility. 'No better method exists,' so we are told in an important document of the time, 'to attract the natives of all countries to come and establish themselves in Holland, than to leave them free to exercise their own religion.'

Religious belief had rather gained than lost by this liberty, which allowed churches, chapels, meeting-houses, and syna-

[1] De Thou, the French ambassador, estimates the number at 30,000.

gogues to exist peacefully side by side. As against the brilliant expansion of the Catholic religion, which appeared in France full of life, rich in good works and ruler of all even the most worldly hearts, the austere discipline of Calvinism had in the United Provinces set its seal upon the education of men's souls. They were marked by a religious faith, tempered by the still recent trials of persecution, which strengthened the conscience by the ever-present thought of God and of eternity, and which, however insufficient it might be, was yet a fruitful source of their attachment to domestic duties, as well as of their fidelity to the obligations of public life. One of the sisters of the Grand Pensionary de Witt wrote to her nephew after a great naval battle: 'A common sailor said to us, "We fought indeed, but God gave the victory, and we thank this fatherly Providence for our preservation." We were surprised to hear a rough man like this speak in so pious a fashion, but a lieutenant told us that piety was very general in all the fleet, and related to us that during the battle, whenever the sailors had a moment's rest, they knelt down to ask the blessing of God.' Religious sentiment, it will be thus seen, retained its wholesome and practical influence upon these maritime populations.

The liberty of the press had taken a firmer hold than religious freedom in the public estimation. Its very cradle was in the United Provinces, where the first newspapers belonging to private proprietors had been published, very different from those issued by the Governments themselves, such as the 'Gazette de France' in France. The most noted were the 'Dutch Mercury,' the 'Amsterdam Gazette,' the 'Extraordinary News' of Leyden, the 'Gazettes' of the Hague and Rotterdam, and the 'Haarlem Gazette,' whose editor, Abraham Casteleyn, had a European reputation. They were printed in medium form in two columns, at first once a week, then twice, and later three times a week, and gave news from all countries, which was supplied to them by highly paid correspondents. They were not originally intended to be in any way controversial, and aimed merely at gratifying public curiosity, but none the less were they full of startling and exciting revelations and reports of

State matters, without fear of offence or indiscretion. They made known, in a few lines of announcement, projects of war or treaty, revealed diplomatic mysteries, lifted the veil from Court intrigues, and denounced public abuses, thus, under very modest appearances, laying the foundation of that precious guarantee of publicity, which has sometimes been disgraced by shameful excesses, but without which there can be no free people.[1] 'The Gazette,' says Bayle, 'is the vehicle for all the evil-speaking of Europe, and it is a common threat to say, "I will expose you in the 'Dutch Gazette.'"' Already it had become a power which recognised no frontiers. 'At Constantinople, at Smyrna, at Cairo, in the Levant, and in both the Indies,' writes a contemporary, 'the Dutch newspapers are read as much as at the Hague or in the Amsterdam coffee-houses.' 'Republics,' he continues, 'are more favourable to this sort of business than monarchies, where apparently reasons of State demand that there should be but one will and one newspaper.' The diplomatic correspondence of the time accordingly show us the frequent complaints of the French Government, which could not tolerate the audacious indiscretions of the Dutch gazetteers and pamphleteers, and was perpetually demanding that they should not be permitted with impunity to trifle with the reputation of sovereigns. 'Make inquiries privately,' writes Louis XIV. to d'Estrades, 'as to who is a certain Italian, a Genoese by birth, living at Amsterdam, who busies himself with distributing news-letters in manuscript, most impudently concocted, concerning the state of my affairs and my future projects, and if you discover anything about him, let me know before you do anything to keep in check this worthy man's insolence.' The ambassadors of Louis XIV. could only reply that in a republic the liberty of speech and writing was not repressed as it was in a monarchy, and represented to him that he must put up with it. 'They would forego anything here,' writes one of them, 'rather than newspapers, which are the principal freight of their boats and waggons.'

Pamphlets were even more numerous than newspapers.

[1] See *Les Gazettes de Hollande et la presse clandestine au* 17*me et au* 18*me siècle*, Hatin. 1873.

In the voluminous collections in which they have been preserved for us, such as the 'Duncaniana Collection,' may be seen the immense number and variety of these almost daily publications, which form a living witness to the often feverish activity of the political literature of the day. This liberty was sometimes checked by the intermittent severities provoked by diplomatic demands, by the necessities of the public peace, or the duty of repressing the virulence of calumny. But it was none the less exercised with a boldness which judged men and things indifferently. 'There is no penalty here,' wrote a French ambassador, 'for those who create a bad feeling against the Government.'

The Constitution of the republic lent itself to this publicity. There was no danger to liberty of the press in the United Provinces, from the power of prince or assembly; it depended almost entirely on the municipal authority, under whose shelter it had been born and nurtured. It satisfied the love of discussion of public affairs which all the populace shared. 'As everyone can easily be acquainted with them,' we find written in an unpublished contemporary memoir, 'seeing that they are transacted almost under the eyes of all, people inquire and compare each other's opinions upon them, and, if they have any talent, they insensibly learn a good deal about politics. Thus in this country judgment and reflection are more developed than elsewhere. Ordinary money-changers converse about the government of the State as they would about their own private business, with such thorough comprehension of the state of affairs that one might suppose they were Government officials.' The United Provinces had become a nation of citizens capable of self-government.

This freedom simplified the exercise of government. The just protection given to all interests, public and private, added to the wide distribution of wealth, and the extent of their commercial resources, enabled the subjects of the republic to support the burden of taxation without feeling its weight too oppressively. The common revenue amounted in ordinary seasons to about twenty-five millions of florins, of which Holland alone collected twelve or fourteen millions. Each

province had to furnish its quota towards the common expenses, which comprised those of the army and the fleet, the ambassadors, and the interest on the federal debt, valued at thirteen millions. It had besides to provide for the expenses which fell to its private share, and a large proportion of which consisted of the payment of provincial debts, which had helped to supply the funds for the war against Spain. Many imposts had been established, and Holland, which supported the greater part of the expenses of the confederation, had multiplied taxes of all kinds, direct and indirect. 'The people cannot warm themselves, can neither eat nor drink, without paying something to the State,' writes a contemporary. The duties upon provisions were such that a dish of fish paid no less than thirty different duties. The most necessary commodities, wheat, flour, and salt, were subject to dues. The produce of the taxes upon provisions was seven millions. Bargains and all business transactions alike were heavily taxed. Succession duty was not less than five per cent. Land paid twenty per cent. on leases, and houses twelve and a half per cent. on their rent. In war time, income-tax, hearth-tax, and a tax on horses and carriages, besides a surtax of one-fourth on travelling fares, provided the extraordinary resources. Notwithstanding the burden of such taxation, the dues were paid without difficulty. It was said that there was no country in the world where the inhabitants were so highly taxed and so well to do. The United Provinces never knew the sufferings which made excise and custom dues and all forms of taxation so detested by the ratepayers in France towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV. 'As taxes are borne equally by great and small,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'as there is no exception made in favour of rank or dignity, and the plenty produced by commerce gives occupation and profit to everyone, the populace contributes willingly to what it considers needful for its liberty and welfare.'

Equality as well as liberty was an instrument of government. The monopoly of power might be in the hands of a few families, but the governing class, consisting of the magistrates of towns, possessed no caste privileges. It enjoyed no

exemption from taxation, and contributed more than any other to the expenses of the Commonwealth. It was careful also to avoid any parade of superiority, gave no occasion for offence by pomp or insolence, and desired to escape notice as much as most people desired to receive it. 'The magistrates here labour for the safety of the inhabitants of the towns, with no expectation of gratitude or reverence, even for services rendered. They are frugal in the expenditure of public moneys, severe in the execution of the laws, haughty in their country's interest towards foreign nations, but at the same time peaceable and not easily offended with their fellow-citizens, and courteous to all sorts of private persons.' The homeliness of their manners made them popular, and the report of a civic banquet mentions amongst those seated at the table of the burghers of the ward not only magistrates of the city, but also the first Minister of the republic, De Witt, and the young Prince of Orange. Authority was exercised without distinction of rank, and so was found easily endurable.

These habits of social life, while they brought all conditions of people together, softened the asperities of democratic rudeness, which was seldom allowed full course. They could not, it is true, prevent the inevitable mixture of vice and virtue, and notably left free access to corruption, which, notwithstanding some memorable examples of integrity, often found an opening. In spite of all the precautions taken, gifts of money, which the donors called 'marks of politeness,' were a sure means for foreign ambassadors to gain credit. Promises of employment were equally in use to obtain votes necessary to the success of certain deliberations, and were useful aids to persuasion. However this might be, the watchful supervision of public opinion prevented or detected most abuses, and if the Government sometimes turned the exercise of power to its own profit, at least it could not use it to the damage of any other person. 'It is pleasant,' wrote a French exile at the Hague, 'to live in a country where the laws protect you from the arbitrary will of men, and where to live perfectly secure you have only to be secure of yourself.'

The constitution of the United Provinces had since the

fourteenth century encouraged these tastes and traditions of popular liberty and civic authority. The government created by it was a confederation of provinces represented by the States-General, and each province, represented by its provincial States, was little more than a confederation of towns. The distinction of orders, which in France constituted the fundamental maxim of the public law of the ancient monarchy, was, so to say, only fictitious in the organisation of the republic. In consequence of the change of religion, the clergy had ceased to form a body in the State, and the apparent power which they retained in the province of Utrecht alone had passed into lay hands; the canons of Utrecht, who were divided into five chapters, were merely proprietors of ecclesiastical estates, who sent eight deputies from their body to the States of their province. The nobles, or equestrian order, who represented the rural population, and who included all those who had the right of administering justice on their own estates, had no preponderance of power. In Guelders only, the most aristocratic of all the provinces, did they share with the deputies of the towns in the exercise of political power. Everywhere else, and especially in Holland, they took only a very subordinate part, and had but a single voice in the assemblies. In Groningen and Friesland, indeed, they were even confounded with all landed proprietors, without distinction of birth. The citizens of the towns, enriched by trade, had the upper hand almost everywhere; they reigned supreme in the councils or senates of the towns called magistracies, from which, except in Guelders, the nobles were excluded.

The town councils in some provinces, in Overyssel, in Groningen, and in the capital of Zealand, Middleburgh, were chosen more or less generally by the votes of the inhabitants. Elsewhere, in Utrecht and Holland, they were self-elected, sometimes with the aid of a small number of privileged electors,[1] and those who belonged to them enjoyed a pension

[1] At Dordrecht, the oldest town in Holland, and the birthplace of John de Witt, according to the municipal organisation which lasted until 1650, these electors were the eight delegates of the Corporations and the forty delegates chosen from a list of a hundred notables.

for life. The numbers composing them were according to the importance of the towns. The Council of Amsterdam was composed of thirty-six members, and that of Utrecht, which had a share in the government of the province, consisted of forty. Generally there were about twenty members. They delegated for terms of from one to three years the executive power and the administration of the finances to governors, who were known as burgomasters. In Holland this civic magistracy was completed by other members of Council, called Sheriffs, who exercised judicial power in many, both civil and criminal cases—in Amsterdam by a Bailiff appointed by the Assembly of the States as chief of the police and of the public forces. The town councils and governors of Holland were assisted also by a Pensionary, whose office was to accompany the deputies of the Council to the assemblies of the States and to speak in their name. Each town, like each province, was a State in itself, joined to others, but retaining full possession of its own autonomy. The municipal power thus exercised served as a basis for the political constitution of the United Provinces, and helped to constantly recruit a civic oligarchy united by community of interests, accustomed to the handling of public affairs, jealous of their independence, and worthy of becoming the governing class of the nation. To bring together all these scattered elements of government and unite them in an association of seven provinces, each governed by its own Assembly, had been the work of the Union of Utrecht. The States-General, entrusted with the diplomatic and military interests of each province and assisted by a Council of State, formed the bond of confederation, but a bond which would hardly have sufficed had not the authority of the Princes of Orange drawn it closer and made it indissoluble.

The republic of the United Provinces, to whose successful Constitution a central power was necessary, had the good fortune of having in their midst a family of princes to whom they owed their independence. The Princes of Orange had been their liberators, but had never been allowed to become their masters. They had been invested with double authority,

military and civil, as commanders-in-chief of the naval and military forces, and as stadtholders. Entrusted by the States-General with the offices of Admiral and Captain-General, they held command in the army and in the fleet, and had the right sometimes of presentation, sometimes of appointment to military rank, a right rather controlled than shared[1] by the States. The office of Stadtholder, which depended upon each province, gave to the Princes of Orange the appointment of municipal magistrates, burgomasters, and sheriffs, of whom the town councils had only reserved to themselves the power of presentation. It carried besides the right of sitting in all the Assemblies. The Stadtholder was a member of the Council of State, a member of the States of Zealand in his capacity of premier noble and sole representative of the nobility in their province, a member of the States of Holland as chief of the whole nobility, and President of the Court of Justice common to Holland and Zealand. Finally, the office of Stadtholder gave the Princes of Orange power to intervene in any differences arising between the provinces. The more inevitable these differences were, in consequence of the necessity of a unanimous vote on the most important deliberations in the General Assembly, the more the frequent exercise of this right of arbitration had strengthened the authority and extended the prerogative of the stadtholders. It was no royalty, however, that they enjoyed. By making the office of Stadtholder elective by law, although hereditary in fact, the States had remained the sovereign power. Up to this time they had escaped the dangers of usurpation, but these dangers always remained to be feared. The prestige of birth of the Princes of Orange, the splendour of the services they had rendered to the national independence and the reformed religion, the vast territorial possessions which made

[1] The appointment of major-generals, lieutenant-generals, and admirals belonged to the States-General; the provincial States reserved to themselves the presentation of three candidates for the command of vacant companies of their contingent of the forces, excepting the foreign companies, which were the most numerous, and in which the appointments were left unreservedly to the Captain-General.

a part of Zealand dependent upon them, the prerogative of military command and of the first civil magistracy which had devolved upon them, seemed to leave open to them the road to supreme power. They had worthily acquired and retained intact as an inheritance the devotion of the army, the fidelity of the nobility, who were still powerful in Guelders and Overyssel, the gratitude of the Calvinist clergy, and the passionate attachment of the populace, who had no interest in maintaining a republican Government in which they had no direct share.

In considering themselves indispensable to the safety of the country, and in desiring to found a dynasty, the Princes of Orange might therefore look upon themselves as called upon to satisfy the general desire. The citizens alone were resolutely opposed to this transformation of their power. They desired not merely to defend their municipal and political liberties against all encroachment, but also to guard the interests of their commerce from the dangers of foreign war. Haters of oppression rather than lovers of liberty, they were bent upon maintaining the principles of a pacific and economical order of government. Whilst the Orange party found partisans in the States-General to whom the authority of the stadtholders seemed a safeguard to the federal power, the party of the burghers was supported by the States of Holland, which represented their policy. Thus, under disguised and modified forms, the struggle was kept up between Monarchists and Republicans. The two parties were face to face, with nearly equally balanced forces, and were destined more than once to come to blows. This almost incessant rivalry, which is the key to the internal history of the United Provinces, prepared for John de Witt the part he was to play and the fate which awaited him.

The deliverance of the United Provinces seemed as if it ought to secure a kingdom to the House of Orange. William I., who had been their liberator, was descended from a princely German family, that of Nassau, whose origin may be traced with certainty as far back as the eleventh century. His ancestors had, as Dukes of Guelders, exercised sovereign

rights in the Low Countries 400 years before the accession of the House of Burgundy, and had faithfully served the princes of that house. Engelbert II. was one of the lieutenants of Charles the Bold and of Maximilian; he left his possessions to his brother John, whose two sons, Henry and William of Nassau, divided the inheritance. William succeeded to the German lands and died young, leaving seven daughters and five sons. He was the father of William I., — the descendant of his second son, John the Old, now occupies the throne of the Netherlands.

Henry, the elder brother of William of Nassau, who had received for his share the family estates in Luxemburg, Brabant, Flanders, and Holland, was tutor to Charles V., of whom he became afterwards the confidant. His son, René of Nassau-Châlons, was heir by his mother Claude of Châlons to his uncle Philibert of Orange, and thus inherited the little principality of Orange, from which all his family took the historic name that it has ever since preserved. He had no children, and, dying at the Emperor's side in the trenches of Saint Dizier, left his great inheritance to his first cousin, William, who thus, at the age of eleven years, found himself heir to the wealth and power of his whole house.

He was educated at the court of Charles V., and, from the trust reposed in him by the Emperor and by Philip II., was early called to high commands and charged with important negotiations, and, being also Stadtholder of the provinces of Holland and Zealand, he seemed destined to lead a life of leisure, taking part in numerous *fêtes*, and keeping open house in his splendid Nassau Palace at Brussels, where he displayed all the luxury of a splendid hospitality. He was thus naturally placed at the head of the Netherlands nobility, and it was from his castle at Breda that he published the declaration known by the name of the Compromise of the Nobles, which has deserved the name of the *Serment du Jeu de Paume* of the sixteenth century.

He obtained the name of the Silent from the imperturbable calm with which he received the news of the projects for the extermination of the heretics, prematurely confided to

him by Henry II. of France. Determined to gain time before undertaking the defence of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, he waited to declare himself a Protestant until the measure of oppression was full; but having once given this irrevocable pledge of his devotion to the persecuted cause, he sacrificed to it repose, fortune, and life. The lessons of courage and holiness that he had received from his mother, Julie de Stolberg, had tempered his character, and armed his mind against all weakness; he was proof against all reverses. His proud motto, 'I will maintain,' became the cry of hope of a whole nation, and the 'Song of William,' a true hymn of war, written by Marnix de Sainte-Aldegonde, has never ceased, during three centuries, to sound the echo of patriotic tradition in Holland.

But William I. founded no dynasty. He refused the sovereignty offered to him by the seven provinces which had formed between them the Union of Utrecht, and only accepted full powers during the time of war. He remained the civil and military chief of a republic, and was surnamed the Father of his Country. Surrounded by brothers as valiant as himself, three of whom met a glorious and premature death on the field of battle, like them he paid with his life's blood for the liberation of his country, and died by the dagger of an assassin, thus leaving to his descendants the glory both of his life and of his death, the fame of a liberator and of a martyr. His son Maurice,[1] though only seventeen years of age and still a student at Leyden, was considered as his successor. He was immediately summoned to a seat in the Council of State, and soon afterwards was invested with all his father's offices. As Captain and Admiral-General of the Union, Stadtholder of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelders, and Overyssel—his cousin, William Louis, son of a brother of William I., being Stadtholder in Friesland and Groningen—he continued his father's work and added to the inheritance of fame that he received from him. But the powers given to him, the successes which he had won, and his great name as a commander, only roused instead of satisfying his ambition.

[1] The son of his second wife, Anne of Saxony.

He thought himself master of the republic. Discontented with the attempts made to hasten the peace, he entered into a dispute with the States of Holland, who showed themselves unfavourable to the continuation of the war, and were alarmed by the encroachments of his power. He claimed to lay down the law to them on the question of the religious differences which divided the republic into two sects, forming as it were two hostile camps. One was that of the Arminians or Remonstrants, so called from the remonstrance or declaration of faith which they had addressed to the States of Holland; the other was that of the Gomarrists or Counter-remonstrants. The former upheld the doctrine of Free-will, the latter that of Predestination. The States of Holland pronounced in favour of the Arminians, and the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, who was seeking a pretext for a rupture, thought the opportunity favourable for invoking the assistance of the States-General against them. The Advocate-General or Minister of Holland, Olden Barneveldt, undertook to resist him. The soldierly courage of which he had given proof in his youth, his diplomatic experience, the part which he had taken in the foundation and preservation of the republic, the authority which he exercised in the Assembly of the Provincial States, all combined to make Barneveldt a formidable rival to the Prince of Orange. He thus found himself exposed to an implacable resentment, to which he finally fell a victim. Maurice paid no respect to his great age or to the six-and-forty years he had spent in the service of his country. Unable to reproach him with any crime, he determined to withdraw him from his natural judges, the States of Holland, and cause him to be condemned by commissioners appointed for the purpose; and he finally sent to the scaffold the venerable man, seventy-two years of age, who had guided and directed his own early years, the man who, according to the widow of William I., had always acted not merely as a friend, but as a true father to the House of Orange. The fame of the victories by which the liberation of the republic was completed could not efface this stain of blood, and the avenging shadow of his

victim seemed evermore to interpose between the Prince of Orange and the royal power, and to prevent the son of William I. from making himself a king.

The third stadtholder, his brother Frederick Henry,[1] the son of William's last wife, Louise de Coligny, who himself married late in life Amelia of Solms, observed a moderate and conciliating policy which caused to be forgotten the abuses of power of which Maurice had been guilty. Recognised as one of the first captains of his day for the resolute determination with which he carried out his plans, for more than twenty years he showed himself equally skilful in conducting military operations and in establishing and preserving civil order. By a constantly affable demeanour and a loyalty which offered no ground for suspicion, he merited what was said of him, 'that he made every man his friend, and seemed to have enemies only that he might be reconciled to them.'

At his death in 1647, Spain was on the eve of fully recognising the independence of the republic by the treaty of Munster, and Frederick Henry having brought to a successful issue the cause of the enfranchisement of his country, transmitted to his son William II., not indeed a throne, but an inheritance of public gratitude, which might well take the place of a crown.

William II. was young and enterprising, and not at all disposed to follow the pacific example of his father. His imprudent ambition provoked the separation of the two parties which were disputing the government of the republic, and his attempt at a coup d'état only prepared the way for an interregnum. While still a child he had inherited his father's offices, and, later on, his family alliances had also helped to give him a taste for power. He was brother-in-law to the Elector of Brandenburg, who had married his sister Louisa Henrietta, and son-in-law to Charles I. of England and Henrietta Maria, the sister of Louis XIII. He was connected thus with the two first royal families of Europe. The proud descendant of the Stuarts, the Princess Mary, who had been

[1] He succeeded Maurice in 1625.

married to him when hardly more than a child, thought it beneath her not to be the wife of a sovereign, and encouraged her husband not to be satisfied to remain merely 'the official of a republic.' Thus encouraged, the son of Frederick Henry cherished the secret purpose of transforming the elective stadtholdership into an hereditary monarchy.

He had been recognised after his father's death as Captain and Admiral-General, and also as Stadtholder of six provinces of the confederation, and he was secure of the seventh province, Friesland, which retained as Stadtholder his cousin Count William Frederick of Nassau, who was devoted to his interests, and whose succession was promised to him. William II., however, was not contented with even these widely extended powers which seemed to him insufficient for the execution of his design. He needed supreme authority to enable him to render assistance to Charles I., threatened by the revolution which was to cost him his throne and his life, and he could not remain deaf to the despairing appeal of his mother-in-law, who had taken refuge in France, and was there reduced to extreme poverty.

Finding in the opposition of the States an insurmountable obstacle to his wish of intervention, he sought the support of France, who could assist him in offering assistance to his father-in-law, and who besides was tempting his ambition with the offer of new conquests. France had not forgiven the republic for having concluded peace with Spain against her opposition, and in disregard of the convention which forbade either of the two allies to treat separately with the common enemy. William II., supported by the province of Zealand, had vainly opposed the conclusion of this negotiation, and was now ready to come to an understanding with Mazarin to break the treaty of Munster and wrest the Netherlands from Spain. Mazarin promised in return to help him to assert his authority over the States. 'You may suggest to the Prince of Orange,' he wrote to the French ambassador, Servien, 'that circumstances might arise in which, if he were assured of the protection and good-will of their Majesties, he might attain to a greatness far other than that of his predecessors.' The astute cardi-

nal had observed that it was easier to govern a prince than an assembly, and he was accordingly interested in subduing the United Provinces to dependence upon their Stadtholder.

But if William desired war, the United Provinces, and in particular the province of Holland, could not dispense with peace. Now that they had been set free they desired to enjoy their liberty at their ease, and refused to ruin themselves in the service of France, who, by declining the proposals of Spain, had almost justified the defection of her ancient allies. So overburdened were they with taxes that they had been forced to neglect their navy, which had been the great instrument of their prosperity. The maintenance of their land forces, amounting to about 57,000 men, exhausted their means. They could not consent to keep up an army which was not needed for their defence, and might be menacing to their freedom.

The province of Holland, which contributed more than half towards the expenses of the Confederation, crushed under the weight of the new loans which were intended to meet an annual deficit of eight millions of florins, had demanded and obtained from the States-General the dismissal of 21,000 men, thereby reducing the army to 36,000 men, and saving the State an expenditure of two and a half millions of florins annually. Not content with this, a further reduction of 7,000 men was required according to the agreement formerly made, which would be chiefly carried out by the suppression of fifty-five foreign companies, and would reduce the army to an effective strength of 29,000 men, the expense of which was calculated at 5,560,000 florins. The States-General had consented to this. There only remained to be arranged for the disbanding of the twenty-nine companies of infantry, numbering about 2,900 men, who were part of the contingent of Holland. This last step was the only one disputed, and concerning which the settlement remained doubtful. The safety of the country was not concerned in so small a reduction, and Holland would no doubt easily have obtained the satisfaction she demanded had not the Prince of Orange sought to turn the difference to account instead of pacifying it.

Such was the origin of a conflict which almost degenerated into a civil war. For the furtherance of his plans it was necessary for the Prince of Orange to replace the army on a war footing, and he could not in any case resign himself to the disbanding of the foreign regiments in whom he had entire confidence. He flattered himself that he might move the States-General and even the States of Holland to renounce their pacific policy. The States-General were displeased with the pretensions of Holland, who seemed to them disposed to domineer over the republic, and there were attached to his cause in the federal assembly several deputies who were desirous of obtaining commissions in the army for their sons. On the other hand, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, the national poet Cats, weakened by age (he was then seventy-three), seemed to him more disposed to yield than to struggle, and he flattered himself that he should easily gain the votes of the principal members of the States of that province. With this object, the Princess Royal, who, according to a contemporary account, was so proud that she never returned any visits, stooped for once to pay familiar visits to such of the burghers' wives as had the reputation of ruling their husbands. The Prince of Orange hoped thus to retard the disbanding of the forces, which he had been putting off for a year. But his expectations were disappointed. The States of Holland, determined to put an end to a debate which seemed to them unreasonably prolonged, frustrated the perpetual adjournments of which they had complained, and themselves fixed the period for the disbanding of the twenty-nine companies whose dismissal had been promised to them. After twelve days of useless deliberations they issued definite orders to that effect. The step had been provoked, but it was precipitate and might give rise to a legal contest as to their competency. The Prince of Orange, therefore, eager to hasten a struggle from which he expected an easy victory, chose to consider the resolution of the States of Holland as a signal for the rupture of the Union, and the very next day solemnly demanded reparation from the States-General, who in their turn issued a counter order. The Prince made skilful use of the rivalry of

power between the two assemblies to obtain for himself extraordinary powers which were contrary to the laws of the Confederation. By the terms of the resolution, which was passed by only four provinces,[1] of which two[2] were represented by but one deputy each, he was authorised to take all measures necessary for the maintenance of order and peace, and particularly for the preservation of the Union. 'The States-General consequently commissioned him to visit the town councils of Holland, accompanied by six members of the States-General and of the Council of State, with all the pomp of a military escort, including a large number of officers. He was charged to address them with remonstrances and threats intended to intimidate the provincial States.'

This was the first act of the coup d'état that he had prepared, and his mistake was quickly shown him. The town councils, not allowing themselves to be either discouraged or dis-united, proved almost unanimously determined to make common cause with the provincial States, who were their lawful superiors. They were on their guard against the overtures made to them. Some evaded them by merely replying that they would send in their reports to the States; others, more bold, complained of an interference which deprived them of the freedom they needed for their deliberations. The Council of Dordrecht, of which Jacob de Witt, father of John de Witt, was burgomaster, consented to receive the stadtholder on condition that he should propose no resolution subversive of the rights of the Council or of the States of Holland. The Prince, having been admitted, desired one of the members of the deputation which accompanied him, Aartsbergen, to make known his proposals. He demanded the censure and disavowal of the deputies of the town who had voted in the Assembly of the States for the dismissal of the troops. The Council waited till the Prince had retired before deliberating, and contented themselves then with justifying the accused, and declaring that they had merely obeyed their instructions. William having demanded and obtained a

[1] Zealand, Overyssel, Friesland, and Groningen.
[2] Overyssel and Friesland.

second hearing, June 10, 1650, Aartsbergen declared in his presence, 'in bitter and insufferable language,' that the envoys of the States-General would not retire before the Council had declared whether it withdrew from the rupture of the Union which had been imputed to them; he openly accused the deputies who represented the towns in the provincial States, and denounced them 'as worthy of punishment in life and goods.' The Council in defending them decided to adhere to their first declaration, but repelled at the same time the offensive accusation, which they qualified as injurious and calumnious, and resolved to bring it before the States as offering an affront to the authority and freedom of the province. They ventured to communicate to the Prince this haughty manifesto, and having by his desire again deliberated upon it, unanimously adopted it anew.

To avoid exposure to such scenes, the Council of Amsterdam, guided by the energetic exhortations of the two brothers Bicker, Andrew, the former burgomaster, and Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, the then burgomaster, sent two councillors, Anthony Aetgens van Waveren and Peter Hasselaar, to meet the Prince and represent to him that his journey was useless, and that he could not be received as the envoy of the States-General. William took no heed of this warning, but the Council of Amsterdam was not to be intimidated by his appearance. They made known to him, while still outside the walls of the town, that he should be received in his capacity of stadtholder, but that he must not hope to obtain an audience if he insisted upon being accompanied by the deputies of the States-General. The Prince refused to yield, and the Council, which had taken all military measures for defence, declared that all its sittings should be adjourned until after his departure, and merely sent excuses to the Prince.

On his return to the Hague, William did not conceal his resentment at being thus set aside. Having reported the results of his tour to the States-General, he entered the Assembly of the States of Holland, gave them notice of his protest, and demanded reparation for the insult which he complained of having received from the Municipal Council of

Amsterdam. 'He took so high a tone,' wrote the French ambassador Brasset, 'that even the members of the Assembly who had been most irritated agreed in concluding that the Prince might be in a humour to risk the last extremities, and that the best thing would be to consider some means of giving him satisfaction and of bringing matters to a compromise.' The deputies of the town of Amsterdam apologised to him for the behaviour of the Council, hoping thus to induce him to withdraw his complaint, but this the Prince refused.[1] Meanwhile the States of Holland were making all possible advances necessary to bring about an arrangement. By William's own avowal, given in his Memoir on the events of the year 1650, they requested that he would himself make some proposal concerning the war establishment, and they promised to revoke provisionally the orders given for the disbanding of the troops.

After some renewed conferences, the Prince promised them to come to an arrangement with the Council of State, which shared the executive power with him, for the transmission of new proposals for an amicable solution to the States-General. The States of Holland made choice of commissioners to examine these proposals and determined to communicate them to the town councils. The only point to be settled concerned the reduction of about 1,300 men. The difference might now be considered as arranged. 'The business of the reduction of the troops was in a very fair way,' wrote a little later one of the principal deputies of Holland, 'it would be probably settled by the towns without a dissentient voice, the nobles alone not agreeing, and all that was needful now was to follow the conciliatory advice which the Pensionary had undertaken to put in writing, according to the opinions of the members.'

The States of Holland, however, did not feel themselves completely reassured. They feared still to be exposed to further visitations of their province by the Prince of Orange.

[1] Memoir concerning the Amsterdam affair, written by the Prince's own hand. *Archives de la Maison d'Orange*, published by M. Groen van Prinsterer, vol. iv. p. 371.

Determined to prevent this, they declared that the stadtholder and the deputies of the States-General might not be received by the town councils without their permission. The Prince having demanded an explanation of this resolution, which he said was contrary to the agreement just re-established, the States of Holland addressed to the States of the other provinces a solemn manifesto claiming the future free exercise of their sovereign powers. In this they stated how easy it would be now to come to an agreement, since all pretext for any difference concerning the reduction of the forces could easily be set aside, unless it was determined to take aggressive measures towards them.

This was no overbold suggestion. Since his return to the Hague the Prince of Orange had only allowed his negotiations to continue that he might have time to prepare the measures already concerted. His partisans had long been advising the most audacious attempts. His cousin, Count William Frederick of Nassau, Stadtholder of Friesland, encouraged him warmly to make the weight of his power felt. 'Keep no terms,' he wrote to him, 'with these traitors and enemies of the State, whom I should heartily like to see on the scaffold. I trust they will be punished according to their deserts and their disloyalty.' On the eve of the action which the Prince of Orange was about to attempt he wrote to him again: 'As I was passing near the Assembly of the States I saw the deputies you had mentioned to me exchanging salutations and compliments; I hope that to-morrow your Highness will have them all together, and that all whom your Highness knows to be your enemies, and consequently the enemies of the State, will be of the party.'

It was he also who suggested the idea of depriving the States of Holland of all power of resistance by the seizure of Amsterdam. The thing would be done, he said, if the Prince would give him some good officers, and some cavalry and infantry. But he recommended him to say nothing of it beforehand. 'Threats only help to put people on their guard,' he wrote; 'you should let deeds and blows speak for you.'

William had allowed himself to be easily persuaded, and had made Amsterdam the principal object in the enterprise he contemplated. He considered this town as the enemy of his House. The burghers of Amsterdam, proud of their wealth and passionately attached to their independence, had never shown any gratitude for the services of the Princes of Orange. They said that it was only fair that they should be well served for their money, and that if the stadtholders did not properly fulfil their office of Captain-General, they could find others to do it for the same price. They had offended William also by allowing allusion to be made on the stage to his connection with a French actress named Labarre. The Prince had revenged himself by sneering at the ladies of Amsterdam, accusing them of being too masculine in their appearance, and saying in jest that they were more fitted to make prisoners of war than captives of love. He was said also to be tempted by the forty millions deposited in the city bank, and to intend to make use of them to raise himself to the sovereignty of the United Provinces. He calculated at least upon securing the establishment of a new Council more submissive to his authority. 'When we have marched the troops into the town,' he wrote in his instructions, 'we must change the magistrates, and must have ready the list of those whom we wish to set in their places.'

He was secure of the goodwill of the army. 'Do not fail,' advised one of his counsellors, 'to flatter the troops, and take pains to make yourself popular, so as the more easily to make an end of your enemies.' The Count of Nassau wrote to advise him to be sure to make the most of the fact of the States of Holland, and particularly those of Amsterdam, having wished to retrench the pay of the soldiers, which would affect all these poor people, and they would thus be more zealous and more eager to be employed;—small things like this were often of assistance in great affairs. The most minute orders were carefully given to all those who acted as accomplices of the Prince. The Count of Nassau, his chief adviser, of whose discretion and energy he had already made proof, was charged with their execution. To him was joined,

as confidential adviser, the son of the former ambassador of the republic in Paris, Aerssen van Sommelsdyck, colonel of horse, member of the States of Holland, and one of the wealthiest inhabitants of the province, who was recommended by his coolness and moderation. He had secured also the assistance of his cousin Frederick, Count Dohna, colonel of the Guelders regiment, who was warmly attached to all the family interests, and whose father was governor of his principality of Orange. The plan of attack was drawn up with the utmost secrecy. The Count of Nassau had begun by reconnoitring Amsterdam and the suburbs of the town; each day's march of the troops and the positions they were to occupy had all been pre-arranged. The Nimeguen and Arnheim horse were to march at a given signal, as if only for exercise. The garrison of Utrecht had orders to be ready for a sally, under the pretext of meeting the Princess Royal, William's wife, who happened to be passing near the town. In order to ensure by stratagem the entry into Amsterdam, it was resolved to make use of the Utrecht boat, which arrived very early in the morning. Fifty officers, under the command of a resolute chief, Major Gentillot, were selected to conceal themselves on board. Once landed, they were to seize one of the gates, called that of the Regulars, which would yield without resistance, and thus open a passage for Count William's horse. Finally, measures had been taken for the arrest of the two chief magistrates of Amsterdam, Andrew Bicker and his colleague, Aetgens van Waveren, who were to be sent to Utrecht to confer with the Prince, so that, deprived of their advice and assistance, surprise and alarm might induce the other councillors to give up the town more readily. The expedients commonly employed to throw dust in people's eyes concerning all such undertakings were not forgotten. 'In order not to alienate the people of Amsterdam,' wrote to the Prince of Orange his confidant, Van Sommelsdyck, 'it will be necessary to issue a brief proclamation, in which the cause of quarrel will be declared to be merely with certain of the magistrates of the city, accusing them of wilfully breaking the Union which has been the security of the republic, and of

desiring to change the form of government for their own advantage and the ruin of the State.'

William II. was envious of Mazarin's good fortune. Six months previously Mazarin had caused to be imprisoned at Vincennes the Prince de Condé, the victor of Rocroy, Fribourg, Nordlingen, and Sens, with his brother, the Prince de Conti, and his brother-in-law, the Duc de Longueville, as companions of his captivity. 'On hearing the news of this arrest, the Prince of Orange,' writes Brasset, the French ambassador to the Hague, 'did not mince matters in the expression of his feelings of admiration and pleasure at such a success. You may be sure that this is not mere affectation or civility, for I know that he takes every opportunity of blaming those who forget the duty and obligations of subjects towards their sovereigns. He easily persuaded himself,' adds Brasset, 'that it will be rather to his advantage than to his prejudice to imitate the French proceedings.'

The day after that on which the States of Holland had published their letter of justification to the States of the other provinces, William thought himself in a position to put his plan in execution, and the attempt was very near being a complete success. Six deputies of the Assembly of Holland seemed to him responsible for the ungracious reception he had met from the town councils of that province. He feared, too, that they would head the party of resistance to him, which might call him severely to account for his attack upon Amsterdam, and perhaps might make him bitterly rue his audacity. These were Jacob de Witt, burgomaster of Dordrecht; Duyst van Voorhout, burgomaster of Delft; John de Waal, burgomaster, and Albert Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem; Nanning Keyser, pensionary of Hoorn, and Stellingwerf, pensionary of Medemblick. He allowed no scruples to hinder him from securing their persons. On Saturday, July 30, 1650, at eight o'clock in the morning, the Prince summoned them to his palace, each unknown to the others, under pretext of seeking for some means of coming to an understanding. As they arrived, unsuspiciously, he caused them in turn to be arrested by the commandant of the Guards, Lieu-

tenant-Colonel Meteren, each being conducted to a separate room, where he was closely guarded by two soldiers. Precautions were meanwhile taken to prevent any rising. The Prince's palace was garrisoned by his own regiment of Guards, 400 strong. The town was filled with troops belonging to the neighbouring garrisons of Rotterdam and Delft, who were summoned in turn so as to create no alarm. The next evening, the six prisoners were taken in two of the Prince's coaches, by roundabout ways and under a strong guard, to the castle of Loevestein, the Vincennes of Holland.

To parade his authority, and to enjoy the confusion of his adversaries, the Prince of Orange informed the States-General of the use he had made of his powers, promising to communicate to them the reason for his action. At the same time he sent for the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Cats, to desire him to announce to the Assembly, together with the news of the arrest of the deputies, the departure of the troops sent against Amsterdam under the orders of the Count of Nassau. The Grand Pensionary, unable to hide his concern made, however, no remonstrance to the Prince. He contented himself with requesting him to give in writing the names of the deputies whom the stadtholder had imprisoned and the reason for their incarceration, because, as he said, he was not sure of his memory,[1] and William readily consented to satisfy him. The announcement threw the Assembly into great uneasiness. The rumour had been spread that other members—Beveren, of Dordrecht, Meerman, burgomaster of Leyden, and Nieuport, pensionary of Schiedam—had only escaped by their accidental absence from sharing the fate of their colleagues. Several deputies fearing that the same fate threatened them, left the hall of Assembly hastily, to retire to their own towns. Of six deputies of Amsterdam only two remained; Kok, lord of Purmeraud, immortalised by Rembrandt's picture, and the pensionary Boom. To conceal their anxiety the Assembly broke up, having adjourned till the second day following, knowing well that by that time the success or failure of the

[1] Aitzema, *Zaken van Staet*, vol. iii. p. 445. *Mémoires de Van der Capellen* vol. ii. p. 281.

stadtholder's enterprise would place them at the mercy of the victor, or restore them to the free exercise of their own power. But while the Prince flattered himself that he could win by a surprise the submission of the town, accident frustrated the execution of his plan. The cavalry had been ordered to assemble at five o'clock in the morning, that they might form a vanguard to the infantry. They were to march from Scherpenzel and to meet under the orders of Count William of Nassau at Abcouden, two leagues from Amsterdam, and in order to disarm suspicion they set out in small detachments. Notwithstanding the summer season, the night was dark and rainy; the lights by which the road was to be known could not be seen, and the principal division, comprising twelve companies of horse, under the command of Captain Mom, lost themselves in the underwood on the plain of Amersfort, and, in spite of their having a guide, only rejoined the headquarters at eight o'clock in the morning. They had besides met the Hamburg mail, and Captain Mom, not knowing the object of the expedition, had allowed it to continue on its way. The alarm had thus been given to the town early in the morning.

Of the four acting city magistrates, Valkenier, president of the Council of Burgomasters, had died a few days previously; two others, Nicholas Corver and Anthony Aetgens van Waveren, were absent or detained at the Hague; Cornelius Bicker van Swieten was alone at his post, not having responded to the invitation of the Prince of Orange, which had seemed to him suspicious. Without allowing himself to be alarmed or disheartened, he at once proceeded to concert arrangements with the President of the Council of Sheriffs, John Huydecooper, lord of Maarseveen, and to their vigilance Amsterdam owed its safety. The town council, summoned by them, met that same morning, and means of resistance were at once improvised. The gates were shut, and the drawbridges raised. The thirty civic companies of arquebusiers, the National Guard of those days, were placed under arms and took possession of the posts assigned to them. Two thousand troops of the militia (*waartgelders*) were enrolled in

five companies and taken into the pay of the city. The sailors were enlisted and armed, and were employed to drag ninety pieces of cannon to the ramparts. Meanwhile the eight frigates and three men-of-war stationed in the harbour took up their places in the basin of the Amstel, and on the arm of the sea called the Y, which surrounds the town with a girdle of naval fortifications. Some very bold proposals were deliberated upon, which were supported by Cornelius Bicker and his brother Andrew, and only adjourned by a majority of two votes. It was decided, however, that in case of necessity the dykes should be cut and the surrounding country flooded, in order to secure the safety of the town against any attack.

The preliminary steps for letting in the waters were already in full activity. To gain possession of Amsterdam it would now be necessary to lay regular siege to it; and there were insuperable obstacles to the siege of a town situated at the head of a gulf, amidst easily submerged marsh lands, and only to be reached by roads and narrow paths intersected by canals. The enterprise, therefore, was a failure as soon as it was discovered. The confederates, who had been hidden in the Utrecht boat, and who were to have opened the door to the invaders, were surprised by daylight, before the arrival of the latter, and, going out to meet them, informed them that it was useless to advance any further.

The Count of Nassau advanced within range of the town ramparts as far as Oudekercke, that he might deliver to the magistrates the Prince of Orange's letter explaining his arrival; and two sheriffs, Huydecooper van Maarseveen and Van der Does, were sent in an armed boat to meet him. They undertook that the Council should hold further deliberations which might satisfy the Prince, and requested him to withdraw, declaring haughtily 'that he might find cause to regret forcing the townspeople to resort to those means of defence with which God and nature had endowed them.'

When the Prince of Orange was informed of this check by a letter from the Count of Nassau, in which he declared himself 'much troubled,' he could not conceal his vexation, but

left the dinner-table hastily, and shut himself up in his closet without speaking to any one. He persuaded himself, however, that his own presence amongst his troops would turn the tide of fortune in his favour, and seemed determined to achieve by force what he had failed to win by surprise. Vainly his best advisers tried to hold him back. Aartsbergen, who had accompanied him in his visits to the Town Councils of Holland, and who until now had seemed to encourage a policy of violence, represented to him that if he went on he would inevitably bring about his ruin, and that, once he allowed his authority to be destroyed, he would never be able to reinstate it. He was, however, deaf even to the respectful remonstrances of the Courts of Justice, which offered their mediation, and leaving at the Hague his company of guards, he mounted his horse on Monday, August 1, in the court of his palace, in the presence of the deputies of the States-General. He was followed by a large number of officers eager to distinguish themselves under his orders. Amongst them were the Count of Brederode, a major-general in the army, his maternal grand-uncle; his cousin the Prince of Tarentum, who had left France after the Fronde, and had come to seek his fortune in the army of the United Provinces; Frederick de Schomberg, his chamberlain, who became afterwards a Marshal of France, and returned to his service after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. But suddenly, near Haarlem, halfway on his journey, there came to meet him Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, one of his most devoted and most enlightened councillors. He put before the Prince the danger which threatened him if the dykes were cut, and represented to him that that he was exposing himself and his forces to the risk of perishing in the midst of an inundation. 'The inhabitants of the town,' writes Pomponne in his memoirs, 'had already opened several sluices, and the water which had spread over the low-lying lands had forced the troops to seek more raised ground, and to retire to the high roads. It lay with them to open all the others, and to imperil the army by submerging the country.' They paused before the dangers of a civil war, which would not have been less fatal than an inundation to the interests of commerce.

The fear of finding themselves isolated assisted also to deter them from over-hasty action. No one of the other towns appeared to support them. Haarlem allowed her gates to be opened freely to the Prince's army; the citizens of Leyden carried pickaxes, spades, and other such material to the camp. As to the States of Holland, taken by surprise by the arrest of their principal members, held in check by the garrison which the Prince had left at the Hague, and treated with suspicion at least, if not with enmity, by the deputies of the other provinces, they dared not give the signal for resistance. They contented themselves with consulting with the States-General in order to call upon the Prince to desist from the siege of Amsterdam, and to obtain the despatch of commissioners with power to recall him. William, on his part, having failed in his attempt, saw the necessity of not persisting in it, but did not choose to appear forced to relinquish it. He accordingly gave orders to his lieutenants to occupy the principal high roads so as to secure the troops against any danger from inundation, and at the same time showed a disposition to take the first steps towards an understanding. In the hope that these might be well received, he wrote a letter to the burgomasters, which he sent by one of his officers, complaining of the refusal of the authorities to admit the Count of Nassau, and demanded an audience for himself.[1]

The Council was summoned. The principal deputies representing it in the Assembly of the States, Corver, Geelvinck, Hasselaar, and De Graeff, had already returned to take their places in it; and those who had remained at the Hague, Kok and the Pensionary Boom, had been recalled. Notwithstanding the obstinate firmness of Cornelius Bicker, the policy of conciliation won the day. Four commissioners were sent to the Prince to offer him their compliments, and to assure him that he would be received. 'I told them,' writes the Prince in the memoir he left behind him, 'that I would not enter

[1] The Prince's memoir. This memoir, as well as the correspondence of the Prince with the commandant of the fortress of Loevestein, has been published by Van Hasselt in the *Recueil de Gids*, 1843.

their town unless I had my troops with me. They replied that they had orders to permit my entrance only with the usual escort.' William waived that point, and assured them that, so far as he was concerned, he could conclude the business quite as well outside the town, provided that they showed him regular powers for treating. He even offered to come to an understanding with them as to the withdrawal of his forces. The next day the deputies returned with full powers to negotiate. The Prince then notified to them in writing the one condition on which he would enter into any arrangement, namely, the exclusion of the burgomaster, Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, and of his brother Andrew. This unjust demand would certainly have broken off the conference, if the secret jealousy of the commissioners of the influence of the two brothers had not induced them to yield. The treaty was signed on August 3; and the burgomaster, far from opposing it, insisted that the Council should accept his resignation and that of his brother. No finer example could have been given, and no higher title to the honours of public life could be found, than thus to have saved their fellow-citizens from political servitude by courageous resistance, and from civil war by a timely resignation. The municipal council of Amsterdam was not slow to render due homage to the two burgomasters in a proclamation which defended their conduct, and which was sent to William while he was still encamped under the walls of the town.

The Prince of Orange might not, however, have obtained this satisfaction if he had not used such haste in concluding the negotiations. Hardly had the members of the Amsterdam Council started to sign the agreement with him, when a deputy from the States-General arrived in haste in the town to persuade the authorities to refuse the demands of the Stadtholder. Whilst he was assuring them, too late, that the States-General had just despatched orders to recall the Stadtholder, William sent them word that the business was concluded.

This convention left undecided the fate of the arrested deputies. They had been sent to Loevestein under the escort

of Meteren, a lieutenant-colonel in the Prince of Orange's guards, who was appointed commandant of the fortress. Within the walls of that old castle they found the remembrance still existing of one of the most illustrious victims of the tyranny practised by the Stadtholder Maurice, uncle of William II. Grotius had been imprisoned there before them, and had only escaped after two years of captivity by the ingenious device of his wife, who had smuggled him out in the chest which she had used to convey his books to him. Measures had now been taken to frustrate every attempt at liberating the prisoners of the Prince of Orange, who, fearing an attack, had sent a supply of powder to the commandant of the fortress.

The unjust persecution endured by the deputies did not shake their courage. They were so closely guarded that they could hold no communication with any one, even by letter. But, notwithstanding the perplexity in which they were placed by their ignorance of events, they were not tempted to yield or even to waver. Twelve days after their arrest, the Prince of Orange made a complaint to the commandant about a letter which they had written to him. Annoyed, no doubt, at his failure to induce them to ask for mercy, William sent the following orders to increase the severity of their imprisonment: 'You are no longer to receive any letters from them, nor to permit them to send any to any person whatsoever, and to take particular care also that none shall reach them from outside.' He was not long, however, before mitigating his severity, and the very next day began to give permission for visits. But he still enjoined the strictest vigilance; he required reports of the prisoners' conversation, and wrote again, at the very moment when he was about to release them, 'You may allow M. Keyser to walk occasionally upon the ramparts, but never without sufficient escort.'

Notwithstanding their courageous attitude, the example of Amsterdam had been in favour of the party of compromise rather than of resistance. The Council of Dordrecht, it is true, had not wavered in its courageous firmness; it appealed boldly to the rights which had been attacked by the kidnap-

ping of their burgomaster, and called upon the deputies representing it in the Assembly of the States 'to use their utmost efforts for the deliverance of the captives before accepting any proposal made.' But the other Town Councils did not show themselves disposed to adopt the same line of conduct. They consented to negotiate with the Prince of Orange, and offered to obtain from the prisoners the resignation of their offices as a condition of freedom. The Pensionary of Delft, Duyst van Voorhout, had already caused his relations as well as the Town Council to intercede for his discharge, and now took the initiative in requesting the favour of being relieved from all employment, on the score of age. The Council of Dordrecht itself recognised the necessity of submission, and on August 14 Jacob de Witt sent in the papers in which he resigned all public office. The Prince obtained a similar pledge rom the other prisoners, and then set them at liberty after a captivity of three weeks.

Angry feelings could not be so quickly allayed, and the two parties remained facing each other in a hostile attitude. To avoid the difficulties of a public entry at the Hague, the Prince spent a few days on one of his estates, and then returned in his hunting-dress. He contented himself with the letter which he had addressed to the States of the province, in which he represented his conduct as having been in conformity with the first orders given him by the States-General to re-establish order and to preserve the Union. The States of Zealand notified to him their unqualified approval. The States of Friesland were equally cordial in their congratulations. The other provinces were satisfied to express their thanks in terms more vague. But the States of Holland, to whom he had especially addressed his defence of his conduct, did not consider it necessary to take any notice of his memorandum, and desired Cats, their Grand Pensionary, to lay it by unopened. They succeeded also in obtaining the satisfaction they demanded, in the dismissal of a part of the forces, to which William had been so much opposed. The States-General finally disbanded fifty-five companies of foot and

twelve of horse—altogether about six thousand men. The question of the dismissal of thirteen hundred men, to which had finally been reduced the difference which provoked the conflict, was, it is true, adjourned, but only for a short time, and the States of Holland might congratulate themselves on a compromise by which they partially gained their cause. They were obliged to promise not to take upon themselves again the right to dismiss their contingent of troops, but they still reserved to themselves freedom to grant or refuse their payment. With this condition they voted for the reduced military establishment as proposed.

The agreement was only apparent. The republican party, convinced by William's attempt that he had intended to change the government of the United Provinces, maintained an attitude of suspicion towards him. Amsterdam was especially bold; the companies of the civic guard were raised from twenty to fifty-four men, and were kept constantly exercised; numerous soldiers were taken into the pay of the town, and the work of the fortifications was actively pushed forward. 'These worthies of Holland,' writes Brasset, the French ambassador, 'have bent, but have not been broken.' The opponents of the Prince of Orange treated him as an enemy, and their hostility is thus explained in a contemporary pamphlet:—'If my goods are stolen, my hands tied, my freedom taken from me, what matters it to me if he who does this is a Spaniard, a barbarian, or a fellow-countryman? If I lose my liberty and become a slave, the fashion signifies little. Freedom is a noble and delicate thing, which must not be touched by any one, and which desires only to be let alone and not troubled.'

William, on his side, notwithstanding the satisfaction he pretended to feel, could not disguise from himself that his coup d'état was a failure. He had succeeded neither in making himself master of Amsterdam, nor in breaking down the power of the States. He had obtained no other advantage than the retirement of eight obnoxious magistrates, and he foresaw that such of their partisans as from fear or policy submitted to the present state of affairs would seize the first oppor-

tunity to renew their action. He did not, however, renounce the idea of getting the government into his own hands. 'He has resigned himself to the dismissal of the troops,' writes Brasset, 'and is making the best of this disagreeable necessity; but I feel sure that, seeing what a game there is to play, he is still thinking how to push matters on so as to annihilate as far as possible a party which he distrusts.'

While he seemed occupied only with hunting-parties on his estate of Dieren, in Guelders, that he might the better conceal his ambitious designs, he was still endeavouring to further them by the project of a secret treaty which he was negotiating with France. Arrogating to himself already the right to dispose as he pleased of the republic, he signed a convention with Count d'Estrades, whom he had summoned to the Hague. By this the King of France and the Prince of Orange engaged themselves 'to attack conjointly the Netherlands on May 1, 1651, with an army of 20,000 foot and 10,000 horse, to break at the same time with Cromwell, to re-establish Charles II. as King of England, and to make no treaty with Spain excepting in concert with each other.' The Prince of Orange guaranteed a fleet of fifty vessels besides the land contingent, and in return for his co-operation was promised the absolute possession of the city of Antwerp and the Duchy of Brabant or Marquisate of the Holy Roman Empire. William thus interested France in the success of his cause by making ready to resume the war with Spain, and calculated, as he told his confidants, on profiting by her assistance to disperse the cabal opposed to him, in which effort he was himself incessantly engaged. 'If he had lived,' writes Racine in his 'Historical Fragments,' 'we may pretty confidently assert that there would have been an end of the republic in Holland.'

The internal pacification amounted then to no more than a truce, when three months later the Prince of Orange, having over-fatigued and heated himself in the chase, was seized with small-pox, of which in a few days he died. He was thus carried off at the age of twenty-four, in the full force and flower of his age, leaving only one son, born a week after his father's death. William II. had lost the best part of the inheritance

he might have bequeathed to him, the attachment of the republican party which he had irretrievably alienated. One of the allegorical medals struck by his enemies after his death represents a fiery steed rushing towards the sun which is rising over Amsterdam: on the reverse appears the fall of Phaëton, with this inscription: *Magnis excidit ausis*—'By his great designs he destroyed himself.'

His attempt at a coup d'état was destined to press heavily and long upon the fate of the posthumous son, who had to wait twenty-two years before succeeding to his ancestral functions. It closed the succession to him for many years, by making the stadtholdership a standing menace to the public freedom. The name of the Castle of Loevestein, put forward as a war-cry and rallying note, was to be made use of henceforward to perpetuate irritating recollections, and recall the constantly reviving fears of the party opposed to the House of Orange. By one of those sudden changes of fortune which generally follow too ambitious a grasp at supreme power, the death of the Prince of Orange, following so closely his attack upon Holland, left the future destinies of his house at the mercy of his enemies. It was the signal for a change of government. 'These people,' wrote the French ambassador, 'appear to intend to profit by the opportunity to govern themselves.' Milton, the great republican poet of England, addressed pointed congratulations to the States-General on the opportune death of the Stadtholder which enabled them to escape from servitude.

The son of William II., an orphan before his birth, and named William like his father, seemed destined to succeed to little more than the paternal name. No child, indeed, could have succeeded to the powers exercised by the late Stadtholder. The family of Orange, which for nearly a century had been invested with the principal civil and military authority in the confederation, was only represented now by an heir so delicate and fragile that it was doubtful if he would live. And the weakness of the house was still further increased by the divisions which took place round his cradle. The rivalry of the two Princesses of Orange, the Princess Dowager and the

Princess Royal, the mother and widow of William II., and their hostility towards Count William of Nassau, who alone could have given them efficient aid, favoured the attempt made by the republican party to establish a new government without a stadtholder.

The Princess Dowager, Amelia of Solms, formerly maid-of-honour to Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, had not sufficient force of character to enable her to rally round herself the partisans of her grandson. She was affable and gracious, as we see her in her portrait in the Amsterdam Gallery, and according to the English ambassador, Temple, who knew her well, 'she was a woman of the most wit and good sense in general that he had known;' and there could be no doubt that the young Prince, so early deprived of his mother, owed to the care of his grandmother the many great qualities he possessed. But she had the reputation of not being disinterested, and was said to be fond of intrigue. She liked to play a double game, and affected a desire to come to a good understanding with the republican party; while, according to the reports sent to Mazarin by the French ambassador, 'if she showed any cordiality towards the chiefs of the party of Holland, it was only in order to obtain the continuation of the pension usually accorded by that province to the widow of their Governor.' At the same time her dislike to her daughter-in-law, the Princess Royal, induced her to appear averse from all monarchical ideas; and she went so far one day as to say, in presence of the French ambassador, 'that she considered Cromwell as a great man, who had known how to execute a lofty and perilous design.' Not all her advances, however, towards the republican party could obtain her credit for sincerity. 'She is detested and despised by the Dutch cabal,' writes a French correspondent, 'although she lent her aid to make peace with Spain.'

She had been successful in looking after her own interests. 'None ever showed more the force of order and economy,' writes Temple, 'than this Princess, who with small revenues, never above 12,000*l.* a year since her husband's death, lived always in as great plenty, and more curiousness and elegance than

is seen in many greater courts.' Her furniture was magnificent, and she was served always on gold plate; all that she touched even was of that metal. When she did not reside on her estate of Turnehout in Brabant, or at Zevenbergen in Holland, she lived at the Hague in the Brantwyck Palace, which is now the royal residence. Her favourite abode was the Forest House, which she had built in the woods of the Hague, in honour of her husband, the Stadtholder Frederick Henry. It was designed by the skilful architect Peter Poot; and nine of the greatest painters of the day, including Rubens and Vandyke, had decorated the principal apartment, the Orange hall, which has remained intact for two centuries, and in which the last Queen of the Netherlands preserved, even in our day, the tradition of a princely hospitality.

The Princess of Orange, Mary, daughter of Charles I., known as the Princess Royal, left at nineteen a widow, and about to become a mother, nearly fell a victim to her grief. Born on the steps of a throne that had been overturned to give place to a scaffold, married to a Prince who might have been expected long to enjoy the authority of Stadtholder, but who had now been struck down by death, she yet found in her hopes of motherhood strength to support the weight of her misfortunes. She resolved to remain constant in her widowhood, because, as she nobly said, she desired to be married only to the interests of her son; and, notwithstanding her youth, she might have been found capable of ruling the affairs of the State, for she had wit, judgment, and a great deal of prudence. But she injured the cause of the young Prince by a pride, of which the fine portrait by Van der Helst in the Amsterdam Gallery has preserved the expression. She was persuaded that, in remaining faithful to her, the friends of the House of Orange did but fulfil their duty, and thought it due to her birth that she should stoop to no familiarity, 'which does not at all please people nowadays,' wrote some Dutchmen who had gone to pay their respects to her before starting on a journey to France. She habitually neglected to secure by any advances on her part the support of the wives of the principal deputies, who might easily have won over their

husbands to the interests of her son. She admitted no one to her table. Thus, when the French ambassador paid her a visit at her country seat of Honsholredyck, as he would not consent to eat with her attendants, he was obliged, as he naïvely writes, to suffer the inconvenience of travelling there and back without refreshment. She continued with her son to inhabit the apartments of the Stadtholders at the Hague, in a wing of the old palace of the Counts of Holland, of which the States-General and the States of Holland occupied the other part. Her principal adviser was Kerckhove, Lord of Heenvliet, Grand Forester of Holland, whom she appointed steward of her household. He had won her favour by the memory of his connection with the King of England, by whom he had been employed in several negotiations, and by the English birth of his wife. But he betrayed the confidence reposed in him, and his disloyalty becoming known at last brought him to deserved disgrace.

Jealous of the free exercise of her natural rights, the Princess Royal had no intention of sharing them with her mother-in-law, whose lower origin she scorned, and she allowed no occasion to pass of treating her with arrogance.

The disputes raised as to the guardianship of the young Prince embittered the animosity of the two Princesses, and made them public. As they could not arrive at an amicable arrangement, they appealed to the States of Holland, who referred the case to the provincial law courts. Whilst they were examining the matter, the Elector of Brandenburg, by his support of the pretensions of the Princess Dowager, whose eldest daughter he had married, and by his appeal to the rights of succession which would accrue to him in case of the death of his nephew, only injured her cause by his interference. After vain attempts to bring about an agreement, the judges finally decided in favour of the claims of the Princess Royal. She was acknowledged as chief guardian, and the most important part of the guardian's authority was left in her hands. The Princess Dowager and the Elector of Brandenburg appealed to the Great Council, which had the power of confirming or reversing the sentences of the Court of Justice.

Two months afterwards the Great Council pronounced for them, and a compromise was thus arranged by which the Princess Royal recognised their right to take part in the guardianship; her share in it, however, being equal to that of the two others combined.

The only chief round whom the Orange party might have rallied was Count William Frederick of Nassau, Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the grandson of John, surnamed the Old, youngest brother of William I. He had distinguished himself in the war of independence, was brave and enterprising, as well as frank and open, and added to natural kindness of heart the most winning courtesy of manner. But the recollection of his attempt against Amsterdam was against him; the failure of that audacious enterprise had made him doubtful of himself, and he feared to expose himself again to the resentment of the States of Holland. The antagonism of the two Princesses could not fail also to discourage him. The Princess Dowager, whose daughter he afterwards married, began by repulsing his offers of service. 'I have been twice to court,' he writes to one of his correspondents, 'to see if her Highness had need of me, or wished to make use of me, but she has never done me that honour.' She believed him to be incompetent for the offices to which he might have aspired, and added 'that in case he should ever attain them she should prefer to quit the country.' The Princess Royal was even less well-disposed towards him; her whole confidence was given to his declared enemy, Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, a natural son of Maurice of Orange. Count William Frederick's conduct provoked this hostility. Immediately after the death of William II. he had got himself appointed Stadtholder of Groningen, instead of seeing this part of his paternal inheritance transferred to the young Prince of Orange, and he had even attempted to obtain the stadtholdership of Overyssel. The two Princesses consequently looked upon him as a champion rather to be feared than trusted for the young Prince, and dreaded lest under the cloak of a protector he might secretly become his rival.

His cousin, Prince John Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, godson

of Maurice of Orange, and through his father John the Young[1] equally descended from William I., had no temptation to grasp at the enjoyment of power by violent means. He was now lieutenant-general of cavalry and governor of Wesel, and had at the age of sixteen acquired military renown, which he had since brilliantly justified. He had been entrusted by the India Company with the government of Brazil, and had during a period of seven years rendered eminent services to the republic both by conquest and administration, so that to him the colony was indebted for a brief prosperity. For the last ten years now he had been again living at the Hague, and had there built for himself, amidst gardens which formed the chief ornament of the town, the splendid palace which bears his name, and has since become the habitation of the Museum. He was in correspondence with all the learned men of the day, and occupied his leisure in the composition of works on natural history which are still justly valued. In 1644 the office of Stadtholder of the Rhenish provinces was committed to him by the Elector of Brandenburg, who had known him in his youth at the University of Cleves. His proved valour, his affability, and the conciliatory temper which, in the opinion of a contemporary, 'caused him readily to accept the view of any one who spoke to him, without preventing his pursuing his aims as adroitly as any man living,' might well have conduced to his popularity. But his commission from a foreign potentate kept him at a distance from the territory of the republic, made him an object of suspicion, and damaged his credit. His only anxiety, however, was to secure the favour of the dominant party. A few days after William's death he presented himself to the States-General to declare to them 'that he was a good and loyal servant of the republic, and to beg that they would so consider him.' He cherished the hope of being called upon, rather than his cousin, the Count of Nassau, to succeed William as captain-general, and was careful to do nothing that might compromise his interests.

Whilst the House of Orange thus offered to the world the

[1] John the Young was the youngest son of John the Old, brother of William I.

spectacle of its divisions, the republican party, firmly knit together and boldly led, was profiting eagerly by circumstances so favourable to the foundation of a new government. The religious pomp and public rejoicings which celebrated the baptism of the young Prince, the honours which the deputies of the States-General, and of the States and principal cities of Holland, vied in offering to him, were but hollow testimonies of dynastic loyalty. Measures had none the less been concerted beforehand to profit by the infant's minority, and not to leave to him as his hereditary right the government of the republic under the power of a regent.

Three days after the death of William II., the former deputies, whom he had treated as state prisoners and deprived of all their offices, were recalled to take their seats in the Assembly. At the same time the provincial Town Councils assumed the power of nominating their own magistrates, which had almost always been left to the pleasure of the Stadtholder, and thus obtained the full enjoyment of municipal freedom. The States of Holland, on their side, grasped the authority hitherto exercised in their province by the Prince of Orange, and claimed successively all the rights of sovereignty. The States of Zealand, notwithstanding the loyalty which they had always preserved towards the House of Orange, exhibited the same eagerness to free themselves from all subjection, by abolishing the dignity of premier noble which had given to the ancestors of the Prince the right of appointing a substitute to represent the whole body of the nobles, and to preside over their deliberations. Thus, before declaring the stadtholdership vacant, the office was deprived of its prerogatives.

To complete this transformation of the government, the States of Holland took the initiative in summoning to the Hague a great assembly of the Confederation, which met at the beginning of the year 1651. They were resolved to take the leading part, and accordingly carefully prepared the programme of all the propositions which they submitted to it; and, to ensure them a favourable reception, they sent deputations to the different provinces composed of the best accredited

representatives of their policy. The congress was called upon to decide between two forms of constitution. The question was whether the United Provinces should be a republic governed by the States-General, or whether the government should belong to the States of each province, with only a reservation in favour of the obligations imposed by the Act of Union. Was each province to be sovereign in itself, or subject to the federal power? Such was the problem, the political importance of which was even greater than the rivalries of the Orange and republican parties.

Holland was the province most interested in this great debate. The republic was maintained principally by her resources, more than half the expenses of the Confederation were borne by her, and even in the sixteenth century she had been described by a French ambassador as 'the best part of the equipment, the rest being merely secondary.' She had the right of appointing the ambassadors and ministers who represented the republic at the courts of France, Sweden, and Germany.[1] And she shared also, by the appointment of one of her deputies, in all extraordinary embassies. Having already this advantage over all the other provinces, Holland could not submit to the supremacy of the States-General, which would reduce her to the level of the other members of the Union, and would leave her the disposal of only one vote in their deliberations. She feared that their power, which had already been turned against her by the Stadtholders Maurice and William II., might become the means of enslaving her. She desired, therefore, to leave in their hands only strictly defined powers, that her independence might be secure from any attack. The condition of success for this policy was the abolition, or at least the vacancy of the stadtholdership, which, combined with the offices of Admiral and Captain-General, had concentrated in the hands of the Princes of Orange all the executive power of the Confederation, without which the States-General would be reduced to impotence. It was for Holland then to bring round to her own views the other pro-

[1] The States-General maintained ordinary embassies only in France and England; Zealand had the right of appointing to the English embassy.

vinces who had contrary interests to defend. It was for this purpose that she had convened a solemn meeting of all the deputies. The great hall of the court of the old Counts of Holland, which still remains intact in the old palace of Binnendof, was prepared for their reception. It was decorated with all the banners won from Spain during the war of independence. Three hundred members were here assembled, and the States of Holland, more effectually to secure their own preponderance, sat in a body. The session was opened by their Grand Pensionary, Jacob Cats, in a speech which declared the necessity of their convocation, and which placed before them for immediate discussion the most urgent questions concerning the maintenance of the Union of Utrecht and the command of the federal army.

The maintenance of the Union of Utrecht seemed to demand the continuance of the stadtholdership in all the provinces, so that the Stadtholders might continue to act as arbitrators in all differences, and might remain the guardians of a good understanding between the confederates. But Holland vigorously maintained the right of each province to govern itself with or without a Stadtholder, and made known, for her part, the irrevocable determination to dispense with the stadtholdership of an infant. This declaration even did not appear sufficient. Desiring to prevent the Stadtholder chosen by any of the other provinces from taking any active part in the internal affairs of the republic, and especially interested in avoiding any intervention from Count William Frederick of Nassau in his capacity of Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, the deputies of Holland secured the passing of a resolution that the office of arbitrator in all disputes between the confederates should belong to the deputies of those provinces that were not interested in the difference. Henceforth, whether the stadtholdership were retained or abolished by the other provinces, it could no longer cause any uneasiness to Holland.

To make her security complete, there remained only to provide against the military power which had always belonged to the Admiral and Captain-General of the Union, who was

appointed by the States-General. She feared the use which might be made of these powers to her detriment, and the still recent recollection of the coup d'état of the last Stadtholder quickened her anxiety. There was no one, indeed, but the young son of William II. who could be chosen for these offices, and it was equally certain that during his minority his place would be filled by the Count of Nassau, who had incurred the enmity of Holland by his expedition against Amsterdam. Holland, therefore, desired only to retain the command of major-general, which was filled by the Count of Brederode, a member of the Provincial Assembly, who since the death of William II. had joined the republican party. In order to prevent any other appointment, she put forward the objections both of the tender age of the young Prince, which made it impossible for him to exercise any military command, and of the peace concluded with Spain, which allowed the republic to dispense without danger with a commander-in-chief.[1] Notwithstanding the resistance of the deputies of Friesland, the other provinces recognised the impossibility of imposing their choice upon Holland without provoking a breach of the Union; and contenting themselves with leaving the supreme command in reserve for the young heir of the House of Orange, they renounced for the present the appointment of an admiral and captain-general. The provincial States shared henceforth with the States-General the command of the federal army; they took into their own hands, not merely the nomination to all commissions and the appointment of commandants of fortresses, but also the issuing of marching orders called *patents*, to which they reserved the right of sanction whenever any troops other than those of their own contingent should be summoned into their territory.[2] The military power was thus divided and

[1] The States-General continued to dispose of appointments to the staff. The provincial States reserved to themselves the appointment of colonels, captains, and lieutenants in the regiments and companies composing their own contingent.

[2] The recollection of the use which William II. had made of his right of issuing patents when he was preparing his coup d'état, caused Holland to insist upon a multiplication of precautions to prevent any abuse. This important prerogative of the Stadtholders was henceforth to be exercised by the States-General, but subject to the preliminary approval of the provincial States.

lessened. It might be found insufficient in time of war, but in time of peace it would no longer be dangerous to internal freedom.

Thus protected for the future against all violence, Holland had only to obtain reparation for the past by inducing the other provinces to annul the resolutions they had passed favourable to the late Stadtholder's enterprise. She was quick to seize the first opportunity which presented itself to obtain this satisfaction. The Grand Pensionary of Holland, Cats, had received from the late Stadtholder a sealed paper, intended to justify the imprisonment of the deputies and the attempt against Amsterdam. The Assembly of the States had left it in his hands. But on the eve of resigning his office he thought himself bound to give up this document, and the majority of the deputies demanded that it should be read. Their indignation was soon aroused, and, indeed, seemed justified by the audacity with which William appealed in defence of his conduct to the violence offered to Olden Barneveldt in the name of the States-General thirty-one years previously, by the Stadtholder Maurice. The States of Holland lost no time in opposing to this memorandum a solemn refutation in which they gave free expression to their just resentment. While the towns, whose deputies had been arrested, certified their innocence and restored them to the exercise of their municipal offices, the States, notwithstanding the opposition of the deputies of Leyden, declared that 'Messrs. Jacob de Witt, de Waal, Ruyl, Duyst van Voorhout, Keyser, and Stellingwerf, as well as the two brothers Cornelius and Andrew Bicker, burgomasters of Amsterdam, had only obeyed the orders of their lawful sovereigns, and the promptings of the zeal and loyalty due to their country.' To this declaration they added a vote of 5,000 florins, to compensate the city of Amsterdam for the expenses incurred in resisting the attack of William II.

They at the same time boldly assumed the offensive, and rather from a well-calculated policy than from any eagerness for reprisals, instituted proceedings against the advisers and accomplices of William's attempt, and in particular against Aerssen van Sommelsdyck, colonel of horse and a member of

their assembly, who had executed the first orders of the Stadtholder. They were the more disposed to act with rigour towards him, that they could not forget the part taken by his father, who had been one of the principal councillors of Prince Maurice of Orange, in the condemnation and execution of Barneveldt. The deputies of Friesland, foreseeing the danger to which these proceedings exposed their Stadtholder, William of Nassau, who had taken an equal share in the coup d'état, urged the States-General to propose to the States of Holland a general amnesty, accompanied by the annulling of the resolutions which had given offence. The deputies of the other provinces were readily disposed to accord a satisfaction which had no appearance of being forced upon them, and which might become a pledge of public peace. The States of Holland for their part consented to drop the legal proceedings already commenced against Sommelsdyck, on condition that he should for the present cease to take his seat in the Assembly of the States;[1] and, proud of the honourable reparation offered to them, were easily persuaded to forego a useless revenge. The disavowal of past proceedings might well suffice them.

The Assembly of the States-General, known as their High Mightinesses, was in future under their dominion. Having no longer either a civil or a military chief to enforce obedience from the different provinces, it was deprived of the preponderating power previously exercised by it. It was composed of deputies from the seven provinces, to each of which the presidency fell in weekly rotation. These deputies were paid by the States of their province.[2] They generally numbered thirty or forty, but their votes were only counted by provinces.[3] The Assembly sat permanently. It fixed the

[1] Sommelsdyck sat in the Assembly as a member of the nobility.

[2] The deputies of Holland to the States-General received four florins daily; those of the other provinces, who had some distance to travel to the Hague, received six florins.

[3] The members of the States-General were delegated from the States of their respective provinces, sometimes for three, sometimes for six years, according to the particular constitution of the province. Some sat during their whole term of office, as the Councillor Pensionary of Holland. Others, like the deputy of the nobles of Holland, and the members for Utrecht and Zealand, held their seats for life.

contingent of the army and the fleet, and divided all common expenses amongst the provinces. It had the right of making treaties, of deliberating and voting upon questions of peace and war, and upon the measures, both financial and military, which concerned the defence of the country. It received foreign ambassadors, and treated with them and with their sovereigns in the name of the republic. The appointment of general officers in the army, and of the principal commanders in the fleet, belonged to it. The superintendence of the colonies and the government of conquered and annexed territories, such as Brabant, which were called countries of the Generality, formed also a part of its functions. Its principal officer was a Secretary-General, who was assisted by a Treasurer and a Receiver-General. The Secretary of the States-General, who held his appointment for life, had charge of all correspondence, drew up and prepared resolutions, had the right to be present at all committees and at conferences with foreign ambassadors, received the despatches of the ministers representing the republic abroad, and thus shared with the Grand Pensionary of Holland in the direction of the government.

The powers of the Federal Assembly, extended as they were, were yet subordinate to the authority of the States of each province. The States-General represented the sovereignty of the members of the Union, but were not themselves sovereign. The States of each province issued instructions to their delegates to the States-General. Their unanimous consent was necessary to give the force of law to the resolutions of the Federal Assembly. In reality the States-General exercised no authority, even nominally, in the different provinces, and they could not publish their resolutions without the assistance of the provincial States, to whom they were forced to appeal. The confederation of the United Provinces was, like that of Switzerland, only with the federal bond more closely drawn, a league of States which, while combining a part of their resources for mutual protection, none the less preserved intact their internal independence.

Beside the States-General was the Council of State, which

in the first days of the republic had presided over the direction of both the home and foreign affairs of the confederation, but was now reduced to scanty powers, which the General Assembly had recently still further restricted. It was composed of twelve members, distributed among the provinces according to their importance;[1] each member voted for himself, and questions were decided by a majority of votes. The Council of State was assisted by a secretary, who in reality took the lead in it. The Stadtholders of the various provinces had seats in it, as had also the officers of the States-General, such as the Secretary, the Treasurer-General, and the Receiver-General. Its principal functions consisted in jurisdiction over the countries known as the Generalities, in financial administration which was also controlled by a court of audit, and superintendence of military matters. The Council of State shared with the States-General the supreme command and direction of all warlike operations, and was more especially charged with the administration of the army. It concerned itself with the levy of troops, with their armament and discipline, and with the maintenance and care of the fortification and frontier places. It drew up each year a detailed report of the common expenses, known as the war report, or the budget of the confederation, and which was laid before it by the Treasurer-General. It decreed the distribution and employment of the revenue, but had no share in the imposition or levying of the taxes,[2] which had been arranged between themselves by the provinces in an Act passed in 1612,[3] and the proceeds of which each province remitted directly to the Receiver-General. The Council of State had no other function, therefore, than to assist the States-General, of which it was in some sort an auxiliary.

[1] Of these twelve councillors, three belonged to Holland, two to Guelders, two to Zealand, two to Friesland, one to the province of Utrecht, one to Oberyssel, and one to Groningen. They were generally elected for three years, but some sat for life.

[2] The right of levying taxes only belonged to the Council of State in the countries of the Generality.

[3] The division of this contribution was approximatively thus:—Holland paid 58 per cent.; Friesland, 11; Zealand, 9; Guelders, 5; Utrecht, 5; Groningen, 5; Overyssel, 3; the countries of the Generality, 1.

The States-General had only a very limited share in the administration of the maritime affairs on which the power of the republic depended. This was in the hands of the admiralties, and was divided between five boards—the admiralty board of the Meuse, which sat at Rotterdam; that of Amsterdam, of North Holland, of Zealand, and of Friesland. These boards, of which three belonged to Holland, were composed of deputies elected by the provincial States or by the municipal councils of the towns having a right to be represented on the board. The preponderance of votes was secured to the deputies of the province where the board sat. This organisation gave a just supremacy to Holland, since she contributed five-sixths of the equipment and armament of the fleet, one-third of which was borne by the city of Amsterdam alone. In time of peace the admiralty of Friesland was reduced to a single vessel, and that of Zealand to only eighteen, while the admiralty boards of Holland could send to sea a hundred and six vessels, North Holland being bound to equip sixteen, Rotterdam twenty, and Amsterdam seventy, of which the smallest was armed with fifty guns. The admiralties kept up each their own squadron, of which the expenses were defrayed by the harbour dues on incoming and outgoing merchant ships,[1] and by the extraordinary subsidies of the States-General. They appointed the lieutenants of their ships, and submitted the names of the captains to the States-General, and each in its own district exercised maritime jurisdiction. As to the lieutenant-admirals, vice-admirals, and rear-admirals of each squadron, they were appointed by the States of the province from which each admiralty depended. The States-General could only appoint to the command in chief of the fleet, and even to this the States of Holland had the right of proposing a candidate. It belonged to them, however, to fix the increase or decrease, as well as the use of the naval forces of the republic, which in time of peace mustered a hundred and fifteen ships of war.

Immediately after the Great Assembly of 1651, the provincial States, who had gradually freed themselves from all

[1] In 1660 and in 1668 these produced at Amsterdam two millions of florins.

dependence on the States-General and the Council of State, and were now for the most part, excepting Friesland and Groningen, untrammelled by the supreme authority of any Stadtholder, and not even subject to the control of a commander-in-chief, became thus possessed of the entire government of the provinces. Their administrative, financial, and military power was completed by the judicial authority; the appointment of the judges was now in their hands, and justice was delivered in their own name, in default of a Stadtholder, without any intervention from the States-General. Some provinces, like Holland and Zealand, might have common tribunals, but none depended upon a federal court. Even the settlement of disputes between the provinces was withdrawn from the functions of the States-General. According to the decision of the Great Assembly of 1651, these differences were in future to be reconciled by means of an almost voluntary arbitration; and before the Assembly dispersed, every precaution had been taken, in case of dissension even between one province and all the others, to protect the rights of the minority against the will of the majority.

Thus left to themselves, but incapable of maintaining themselves single-handed, and no longer able to invoke the authority of the States-General as a protection against the domination of Holland, the different provinces must needs fall into dependence upon Holland, and would surely be brought under her ascendency in spite of the resistance of Zealand, which could alone though unsuccessfully attempt rivalry with her. Some years later, Huybert, the Pensionary of Zealand, wrote accordingly, 'Our ancestors had reason to foresee and fear, while they were still so fortunate as to possess a chief of the State, that in default of such a chief that province would attempt to make herself the centre of all, and to exercise supremacy over the confederates, as we see now has been done.'

Freed from the counterbalancing power of the Stadtholder, Holland to a great extent absorbed the federal power, and was the gainer by all that that power lost. The supremacy to which she aspired was justified not merely by the contingent

of men, money, and ships, which she furnished to the confederation. The division of all the powers of government between the States-General, the Council of State, and the provincial States, made the guardianship of Holland the more necessary that by it alone could the dissolution of the republic be averted.

The States of Holland then were called upon to fill the vacancy of the stadtholdership. This assembly, destined henceforward to be the principal instrument of government of the republic, was composed partly of nobles and partly of deputies from the towns.

Of the nobles, among whom were counted all holders of fiefs, only ten had seats in the States. They were appointed for life, and recruited by election among themselves, and in later times obtained the privilege of hereditary succession. As members by right of birth they took part in all assemblies and all councils, both of the province and of the confederation, and had besides obtained for themselves the sole right to several offices, both on the admiralty boards and in the courts of justice. Their political authority, however, was very limited. They had but one vote in the States, and could not therefore balance the preponderating power of the deputies of the towns.

Eighteen towns had the right of being represented in the States. The deputies whom they sent and whose expenses they paid were appointed by the councils or senates, from whom the delegates held their powers and received their instructions. They were reappointed every three years, and had almost always the Pensionary of the town as their official speaker. Each town having but one vote, whatever number of deputies might be sent, the assembly consisted of only nineteen voters, although the numbers were from 100 to 150.

The States of Holland, known under the name of Noble and Great Mightinesses, sat four times a year—in February, June, September, and November. They deliberated upon all matters concerning the province of Holland, or having reference to the numerous offices of which they had the disposal.

Proposals affecting the confederation were also submitted to them, their delegates to the States-General[1] being bound to consult them before any vote of importance was taken. Their decisions were generally settled by committees formed by the deputies of the principal towns. A bare majority was not always sufficient; unanimity of votes was required in questions of taxation, of peace or war, or of the internal government of the province. Each deputation, in fact, represented a free town, and could not bind any other by its vote. 'It is a fault in those States that there should be so many members,' we find in a diplomatic correspondence of the day; 'every member has a head of his own, but all the heads must be under one hat before anything can be done.' In point of fact, however, some skilfully contrived compromise was generally found to smooth away any difference of opinion, and the minority desisted from offering any obstacle to the final adoption of important measures. The common consent might not be given immediately, but it was hardly ever really refused.

The Grand Pensionary was the minister of the States of Holland. He was appointed for five years, and represented them in the States-General. They had besides the services of the Councillor deputies (*gecommitteerde raden*). The board of Councillor deputies consisted of ten members, one of whom was appointed for life by the nobles, and was president, and the others sent for two or three years by the chief towns of the province, and in regular rotation by the smaller towns. The authority enjoyed by the Council of State in the confederation was very much the same as that exercised by the Councillor deputies in the provinces. They had the administration of the finances, decided questions of taxation, directed military matters, and had the right to appoint all officers below the rank of captain. It was their business to convoke

[1] The deputies sent by the States of Holland to the States-General were—one deputy from the nobles, appointed for life, two deputies sent alternately from the eight chief towns, and one from North Holland, who were all three appointed for three years, without counting the Grand Pensionary, who sat for the term of his office.

the States of Holland, whenever their assembly was to be summoned at other times than its regular sessions, to prepare all measures, and to secure their execution. They sat in a body in the assembly, and had seats also in the States-General. Two Councillor deputies were always on duty there, besides other members of the States of Holland.

The various administrative boards of the province were appointed by the States, and depended upon them. These were—the three admiralty boards; the six boards of Counts or judges of the dykes (*dyckgraaf*), with their councillors (*heemraden*), who were entrusted with the superintendence of the waters, roads, and bridges in their district, and with the levying of the dues for their maintenance; the board of curators of the University of Leyden, the courts of audit, and of public domains, the two courts of justice, the Provincial Court and the Grand Council, which exercised jurisdiction in Holland and Zealand. The Provincial Court, or Court of Justice properly so called, had supreme authority in criminal cases, and heard civil suits in the first instance; the Grand Council sat on appeals in civil cases, and performed also the functions of a court of error.

The authority of the States was recognised as supreme by all these boards, and was inferior only to the municipal councils, to whom, through their election of its members, the Assembly of the States was subordinated. To confirm their supremacy more effectually, however, they resolved that in future the magistrates and governors of all towns in the province should take an oath of allegiance to them. The domination which the States of Holland now proposed to extend equally over the other provinces was the more easily imposed by them, that the whole government of the confederation was in some sort concentrated round their assembly. By establishing their seat at the Hague, the States-General had made that town the metropolis of the United Provinces. It had been formerly a hunting-seat of the Counts of Holland, and seemed marked out for a capital by the traditions of luxury and taste which had taken root in it, and by the beauty lent to it by its canals, its stately avenues and verdant lawns, its ancient

forest, and the near neighbourhood of the sea, which made Scheveningen the favourite walk of its inhabitants. In its capacity of a federal city it was not represented in the States, and was directly subject to them. The commissioners of the Hague, when summoned to speak in their assembly, gave their opinions standing and with uncovered heads, and the city enjoyed none of the attributes of sovereignty. Open on all sides, having neither fortified gates nor drawbridges, nor even chains drawn across the roadway to prevent people going in or out at any hour, the Hague seemed formed to be the seat of a pacific and liberal government founded upon public confidence.

The old palace or court of the Counts of Holland, the hereditary dwelling of the Princes of Orange, which served as a hall of assembly for the provincial States, and in which sat the courts of law, was also the meeting-place for the States-General, and for the Council of State. The States of Holland were thus both the guardians and the host of the federal power. The palace was built in the form of a square, and enclosed between its wings a large inner court (the Binnenhof) some fifty paces long, in which was a covered hall where the great assemblies of the confederation were held. It was built at the end of the sixteenth century, in the severe style of the architecture of that period, and with its brick walls, which remain perfect to this day, it recalls the ancient majesty of the traditions of the republic, preserves the noble and tragic memories of past centuries, and seems the very dwelling of history. The south wing rises abruptly from the great basin or fishpond where, round a green island where swans disport themselves, stretches a sheet of water to the very foot of the walls, opposite to which is a terrace shaded by fine trees (the Vijverberg), which skirts the edge and forms a sort of quay. It was in this part of the building that the States-General and the States of Holland found themselves neighbours in almost adjoining halls. The States-General sat in the hall now known as the Hall of Truce. The hall which the States of Holland occupied a few years later, and which is now used for the

upper chamber of the kingdom of the Netherlands, added by its gorgeous decorations to the prestige of their power.

It was situated on the first floor, surmounted by a dome, and had five windows looking to the water. The walls were hung with tapestry representing the inhabitants of different countries. At each extremity was a marble chimney-piece, enriched with sculpture and paintings. In the middle was an enclosure or reserved space, surrounded by a balustrade. Within this space sat the nobles and the deputies of the eighteen towns that had the right to vote. In the centre the nobles occupied the first table. At the end of this table, facing the west fireplace, was placed the Grand Pensionary's chair. Behind this chair were the benches for the councillor deputies. Next to them a second table belonged to the deputies of Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leyden, and Brill. Opposite sat the deputies of North Holland. Above the benches of the councillor deputies three other tables were arranged in graduated steps: the first, for the deputies of Amsterdam; the second, for those of Gouda and Rotterdam; the highest, for the deputies of Gorcum, Schiedam, and Schoonhoen. Each table had a raised desk for the pensionary of the town, whose seat faced those of the deputies to whom he was attached. Outside the enclosure, on either hand of the western fireplace, were the seats of the secretaries of each town. A staircase communicated from this room with that in which sat the councillor deputies on the ground-floor, close to the private room of the Grand Pensionary.

Within these walls the political freedom of modern times was to take a bold and glorious flight. England, which had already enjoyed parliamentary government, had now passed from those attempts at absolute power for which Charles I. paid so heavy a penalty, to the rude and sullen dominion imposed upon the English nation for ten years by the strong hand of Cromwell. France, dazzled by the budding fortunes of Louis XIV., disgusted with the intrigues and weary of the troubles of the Fronde, was disposed to seek only for the glories of arms or genius, and to allow herself to be governed rather than to bear the fatigue of governing herself.

What a contrast to these two countries, of which one was on the verge of a revolution little favourable to freedom, and the other becoming accustomed to subjection for the sake of military glory, are the deliberative and sovereign assemblies of the States-General and the States of Holland! They recall the best days of the ancient republic, only with slavery omitted and Christianity added to them. With them government is neither the privilege of one man nor the right of the multitude; it is divided amongst all those who seem most capable of exercising it, and who have passed through a preliminary apprenticeship in the councils of their native towns. Power belongs thus to citizens who devote their time and labour to public business almost without recompense, realising the idea of a cheap government. They hold their offices from no popular election, but by choice amongst themselves, and are subject to the control of a free press, which, without indulging in license, serves as a protection to all interests and a safeguard against all injustice. If they enjoy political privileges, these are justified by the good administration of town and province, the honest management of the finances, the economical use of public money; they are the enemies of all unnecessary wars, but are at the same time jealous for the greatness of their country; heroes when the need arises, but without arrogance or pomp; honest servants of a government founded upon the respect due to the dignity of man, and pursuing without fear of obstacle the glorious design of raising and maintaining a republic to an equality with the greatest monarchies.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY LIFE OF A GREAT MAN—EDUCATION—PRIVATE LIFE, AND COMMENCEMENT OF JOHN DE WITT'S POLITICAL CAREER.

A great minister necessary to Holland—Birth of John de Witt and his brother Cornelius—Their family—Their education—Their conduct during their father's captivity—John de Witt's entry into public life—He is appointed pensionary of Dordrecht—He is sent to the Grand Assembly of 1651—His report on the coup d'état—His deputations in Zealand—His provisional appointment as Grand Pensionary—His definite nomination—His private correspondence—His relations to his family and in society—His marriage with Wendela Bicker—His political friends, Nieupoort, Van Beuningen, and Beverningh—His official functions—His character—His portrait.

Called upon by the vacancy in the stadtholdership to the government of the United Provinces, without any legal power of enforcing obedience, Holland required a statesman who could secure this political supremacy and use it for her benefit. The nomination of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary placed at her service one of the youngest members of the assembly. She made him Prime Minister, and he, by his superiority of talent as well as of character, made her mistress of the confederation. The preponderance of his authority enabled him to combine in one compact form all the forces of the Dutch oligarchy, so as to give them a considerable share in the government, and made him in some measure an absolute president of the republic. The origin and traditions of John de Witt's family had prepared him for that great part which he was to play for twenty years. His first beginnings marked the way he was about to tread. They explain his whole life. It was that of a great and good man serving a grand cause to which he linked his own fate, and it

exhibits in all their brightness those public and private virtues which do honour to human nature.

John de Witt, born at Dordrecht on September 24, 1625, between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, was the youngest of the four children of Jacob de Witt and Anna van de Corput. His elder brother, Cornelius, who shared in the vicissitudes of his career, was older than he by two years; but although he eventually reached a stature above the common, he was born so feeble and delicate that he owed his life to the extraordinary heat on the day of his birth.

John and Cornelius de Witt had two sisters, older than themselves. The elder, Johanna or Jeanne, was married to Jacob Bevern de Zwyndrecht, who belonged to one of the principal families in Dordrecht. The younger, Maria, married Diederich or Theodore Hœufft, whose uncle, John Hœufft, had settled in France for the purpose of reclaiming the marshes in the neighbourhood of La Rochelle, and who himself succeeded by inheritance from one of his brothers to the French property of Fontaine Péreuse, whence he took his title.[1]

The paternal family of John de Witt, which had always had its residence at Dordrecht, counted eleven known generations before him. It dated back to the later years of the thirteenth century, and had twice changed the spelling of the original name Die Witte (White), to De Witte in the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth century to De Witt.[2] Their hereditary arms represented two greyhounds pursuing a hare.

From the third generation to the fifteenth century they exercised municipal functions, and took their place among the notabilities of the town of Dordrecht, to which they furnished in turn councillors, sheriffs, and a burgomaster. They included amongst their number Catholic priests, priors of monasteries, and nuns, one of whom belonged to the Convent

[1] See *Almanach de Hollande*, 1850, p. 91: 'Letters from John de Witt to Diederich Hœufft,' published by M. Lotsij, formerly Minister for Naval Affairs, and a descendant of Hœufft on his mother's side.

[2] These details and a few of those which follow are mentioned in a recent work by Mr. Geddes, *The Administration of John de Witt*, The Hague, 1879.

of St. Agnes established in the town. In the library of Dordrecht a missal has been preserved which was presented to it at the commencement of the fifteenth century by one of John de Witt's oldest ancestors. His grandfather, Cornelius de Witt, contemporary of William the Silent, was the first of his family who professed the reformed religion. After having received at different municipal elections the testimony of the confidence of his fellow-citizens, he was called upon in turns to sit in the Assembly of the States of Holland and in that of the States-General. His father, Jacob de Witt, who was born on January 10, 1674, surviving his glorious sons for more than a year, had three sisters and two brothers, of whom one, Andrew, exercised *ad interim* for several months the office of Grand Pensionary of the province after the death of Olden Barneveldt, and became eventually one of the judges of Holland.

Jacob de Witt had from his youth up formed one of the Council of Dordrecht. After having been a long time sheriff, he was made burgomaster and six times re-elected. He was collector of taxes, superintendent of dykes, and custodian of the town library, and he further distinguished himself in foreign negotiations and in the deliberations of the Assembly. Designated as a member of the embassies to Denmark and Sweden, he received from Queen Christina a gold medal bearing on one side the royal portrait embellished with diamonds, and on the other the arms of the kingdom. On his return to Holland, Jacob de Witt was sent as deputy from Dordrecht to the Provincial States, represented them in the States-General, and was charged with fresh negotiations to the Hanseatic towns. Austere in his manners, and becoming as age advanced somewhat misanthropical, shunning rather than seeking society, having a great inclination for solitude, preferring to remain in the contemplation of his religious faith, he had no luxurious habits, and lived at Dordrecht with the simplest of households. Andrew Colvius, one of his contemporaries, called him 'the glory of his native town.' His portrait, painted in the great Rembrandt style, represents him as an old man dressed in black, with his head erect, having

thin hands with long taper fingers, a stern look, and a proud and stiff bearing.

His wife, Anna van de Corput, born April 24, 1600, and married at sixteen, belonged to a great Brabant family.

She was the daughter of the Sheriff of Bréda. Her mother, Maria Büysen, had married a second time John Berck, secretary to the town of Dordrecht, and ambassador in England and at Venice. She had four sisters. One, Maria, who lived to a very advanced age, and with whom John de Witt always kept up a very intimate correspondence, had married Van der Meer, one of the judges of Holland; the second, Gertrude, was the wife of Cornelius van Sypesteyn, a member of the Chapter of Utrecht and one of John de Witt's early patrons; the third, Cornelia, married Quentyn de Veer, who was a bailiff at the Hague; lastly, the youngest, Antonia, was married to Anthony Vivien, whose son was the faithful companion of John de Witt through good and evil fortune.

Anna van de Corput was called 'pious and strict' by the friends of the family; her portrait represents her still young, in a rich dress, one of those handsome Flemish matrons whose type has been immortalised by the great painters of the time. She had taken the greatest pains with the education of her children.

She encouraged their early studies, and if she did not live to enjoy their greatness, had at least the merit of having paved the way for it. She died January 22, 1645, at the age of forty-five, far from her husband, who was detained in the service of the republic on an embassy to Sweden, and was buried in St. Catherine's Chapel in the Cathedral of Dordrecht.

Jacob de Witt, on hearing of the death of his wife, 'with a trembling in all his limbs,' as he writes in his official notes, addressed to his colleagues the following letter, which gives testimony to his religious sentiments:—'Yesterday I opened my despatches and learned with much disturbance that it had pleased the Almighty God to call my dear and worthy wife to His heavenly kingdom. Although I have been brought up to believe, and well understand, that all events following on the

will of God should be received and accepted as good, I am, nevertheless, beyond measure afflicted, so much so that I have resolved to start immediately for Colmar, that I may have a few days in which to settle about my mourning, and to try and calm my grief.'

The family mode of life had, from their earliest years, familiarised the sons of the Dordrecht burgomaster with public affairs; it had also taught them to court those intellectual pleasures for which Dutch society had great taste. Jacob de Witt, in his capacity of curator of the Latin school at Dordrecht, collected at his house the pastors, professors, learned men, and writers of the town.[1]

Anna van de Corput was herself on intimate terms with many distinguished pastors of the Calvinist Church, with the celebrated doctor and professor Beverwijck, whose Latin and Greek verses in celebration of his domestic joys and sorrows have been reproduced in the memoirs of the times. She held her place worthily in the midst of her illustrious contemporaries, who were ardently devoted to the culture of literature, and who, according to the panegyrics of the times, 'made the town of Dordrecht the throne of the Muses, as well as the paradise of the Arts.' There were Anna von Blockland, to whom Beverwijck dedicated his work entitled 'The Excellence of the Female Sex;' Maria de Witt, who at sixteen carried on a correspondence in verse with Cats; Anna Maria van Schurman, who joined to the culture of the arts a knowledge of dead and living languages;[2] Margaretha Godewyck, the most celebrated of all, who, versed in the profoundest studies of philosophy and astronomy, united to them the gifts of imagination, writing Latin, French, and Dutch poetry, and was surnamed, 'the precious pearl in the virginal crown of the town.'

The statesmen of Dordrecht, John van de Corput (John de Witt's maternal grandfather), John Berck (the second husband of his maternal grandmother), Ruysch, Halewyn, Slingelandt, used to meet in this learned company, whose Mæcenas,

[1] Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin.* Id. Geschiedkundige Letter, 1840.
[2] Schotel, *Vie d'Anna Maria Van Schurman*, 1853.

Cornelius van Beveren, exercised his kindly hospitality in his abode at Develstein.[1] The most illustrious foreigners had for some time been attracted to Dordrecht by the prestige of their literary renown.

The municipal registers attest the passage of Guy Patin, of Montaigne, and of Descartes, who had acquired, through the solution of a geometrical problem, the friendship of Isaac Beeckman, the great mathematician and philosopher, and rector of the Latin School in the town.

John de Witt had thus been enabled from his childhood to profit in the intimacy of his family circle by its relations with a select society, which could not fail to assist in the early development of his mind. He had, like his brother Cornelius, begun his studies in the Latin School of Dordrecht, whose teachings enjoyed a justly acquired celebrity. Before the plague of 1635, which decimated masters and pupils, it was frequented by more than 600 scholars coming in great numbers from the different provinces of the Confederation, and even from France and Germany. When John de Witt entered the school in 1636, the curators had just solemnly inaugurated it as an 'Illustrious' or High School,[2] in order to stop the flight of the pupils, whom this contagious disease had caused to be recalled to their families. They instituted chairs for Natural Philosophy, Medicine and Surgery, Greek Literature and History, which they confided to the most learned professors, to whom they offered a salary of 200 florins.

Doctor Isaac Beeckman, who had fallen a victim to the plague, had been replaced, his successor being the pastor Gaspard Parduyn, beloved and respected by his pupils, with whom, according to a writer of the period, 'he used neither rod nor ferule.'

It was under his direction that John de Witt completed his studies. He began by learning the language and literature of his country: these were taught him by Peter Godewyck, who has left many verses written in honour of John de Witt's family, and afterwards dedicated to his distinguished pupil.

[1] Schotel, *De Illustre School te Dordrecht*, 1857, p. 75.
[2] *Idem.*

John Goris was his professor of history. He studied Greek and Latin with Abraham Beeckman, a brother of the former rector of the school. He joined to his knowledge of the dead languages that of English and especially of French, which he spoke and wrote with great facility. His flexible mind, his good memory and solid judgment, lent themselves to the most varied acquirements. By the pious care of his parents, his religious instruction had been intrusted to the pastor Peter Wassenburgh. John de Witt had been educated in the doctrines of the Reformed Church, to which his father and mother, who belonged to the Walloon sect founded by the Protestants of the Spanish Netherlands, were faithfully attached. He drew thence a deeply-rooted belief, which armed him all his life against weaknesses and temptations, and gives to his private and public letters a tone of gentle resignation. His piety was combined with great tolerance; far from showing any hostility towards Catholics, writes a contemporary ambassador, 'he seemed inclined to accord them the most perfect freedom in their religion.'

Moreover, the opinions of his masters and his family relations inclined him to follow the philosophy of Descartes, but the furious zeal of the pastors who combated it could not later pardon in John de Witt either his Cartesian doctrines or his principles of moderation, which they regarded as contrary to Protestant orthodoxy.

Having quitted the Latin School at sixteen, he was sent with his brother to the University of Leyden, where they were both entered on October 24, 1641.[1] They lived there with the professor of law Bernard van Schooten, who had formerly made his mark at the university in Friesland, and who, according to the testimony of a contemporary, enjoyed universal esteem for his personal qualities as well as in his capacity of learned man and teacher. The university course was divided into five faculties—namely, law, philosophy com-

[1] The record of 'Civium academicorum' of the University of Leyden makes John de Witt in 1641 eighteen years of age, and Cornelius de Witt twenty, whereas John was sixteen and Cornelius eighteen. Was this an intentional error to give John de Witt, by adding some years, the right of entrance to the University?

bined with science, theology, literature, and medicine. John de Witt for four years followed the private and public law classes, completing at the same time his mathematical studies which he had begun at the Latin School. The records of the University bear no trace of any degree having been taken by either of the brothers on leaving it, after the death of their mother, to go to France and England. The account of this excursion, unfortunately reduced to a mere list of stages and expenses, without any remarks, in no way resembles the interesting volume entitled 'The Journey of Two Young Dutchmen to Paris in 1657 and 1658,' recently published.

It has been preserved in a note-book of John de Witt's belonging to the family records. The two brothers, starting October 14, 1645, after having traversed the Spanish Netherlands and visited Antwerp, stopped for a fortnight at Paris, and then established themselves at Anger, whose University was famous in Europe.

They stayed there three months and took their degrees as Doctors of Law. Although there is no registry of the entrances to the university, which had been intermitted since 1636, John de Witt's note-book leaves no doubt as to this. It bears the following entry: 'To the Rector for our diploma, one hundred and two florins.' Having obtained their diploma, the two brothers, 'furnished with horses,' started for their tour of France. They travelled over the west and south of the kingdom, visiting Orleans, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Nismes, and Montpellier, where, 'finding some pleasant society,' they stayed for several weeks. Having reached Marseilles and Toulon, they then went to Lyons, and returning in October to Paris, remained there for some time. They did not leave till the spring of the following year, continued their journey to Brittany and Normandy, and embarked at Calais for England, where they only remained six weeks. They arrived just at the moment when Charles I. had been seized from the custody of the Parliamentary Commissioners, and taken to the head-quarters of the army to be given up to Cromwell. No trace of the impression such events must have made upon them is to be found in John de Witt's note-book. It merely

mentions that, after visiting the principal monuments in London, they travelled over the south-west of England, stopping at Bristol and Oxford, and that they were invited to join in several shooting-parties.

They ended their journey in company with the old ambassador of the States-General, Joachimi, who was on his way to the King, whom Fairfax had brought into the neighbourhood of London. After having been received by the Lord General and the Parliamentary Commissioners, who were in conference with Charles I., the ambassador had an audience with the King, at which, apparently, the two brothers were not present, no mention of it being made in John de Witt's note-book. A week later they quitted England, and returned to their family after an absence of about two years.

After having taken their oath as advocates in the Law Courts, they separated. Cornelius de Witt remained at Dordrecht, where he lived with his sister Maria Hœufft; and, although not absolutely indifferent to the many distractions of social life, he gave evidence of such sober tastes that his father got him appointed in the following year sheriff of the town. John de Witt, although retaining his municipal domicile at Dordrecht, settled himself at the Hague, where he worked under the direction of the retired lawyer Van den Andel. His first pleadings showed his powers of speech. His scientific tastes turned his mind towards mathematics, to which he gave up his leisure time during his years at the bar. The earliest letter to be found amongst his correspondence in the archives at the Hague is one written to him by his uncle, Anthony Vivien, to congratulate him on his interpretation of four geometrical problems according to Descartes' method. On the other hand, his travels had taught him to compare the situation of the other European States with those of his own country, and had thus prepared him for public life. His success at the bar, his varied knowledge, and his great aptitude in applying it, with his growing renown for wisdom and talent, seemed already to point him out for a great destiny. According to an account of the time, the jurisconsult Vermeulen, who had frequent intercourse with Jacob de Witt, had

been asked to examine his son John on the constitution of the republic, when he was barely eighteen, and he had shown much astonishment at finding in so young a man those brilliant and solid gifts of a political education which are generally the result of long study and an advanced age.

Exhorting him to continue thus, Vermeulen had predicted that he would make himself a name lasting to long future ages.[1]

This serious employment of his early youth in no way deterred him from worldly pleasures or from efforts of imagination. Before being sent to the university he had eagerly joined in the dancing classes at Dordrecht, which were not spared the censures of the Protestant Consistory.[2] He habituated himself to declamation, and was often with his brother given the principal parts in the Latin and Dutch tragedies performed by the pupils of the Latin School. At the same time he accustomed himself to bodily exercises, and became particularly skilled at tennis. To the practice of dancing he joined the study of music, and was remarkable for his talent on the violin. He learned backgammon, chess, games of cards, and even conjuring and sleight-of-hand tricks. He could thus take his part in social amusements, and had learnt the art of pleasing in company, where he was much sought after.[3] His letters to his sisters and their answers show the pains he took with his dress, asking them for ruffles, handkerchiefs, and boots, and taking charge, on his side, of all their household commissions, notably in the choice of a French nurse for his eldest sister's children. 'No one worked harder at his studies and business,' writes a contemporary; 'but neither was anyone more cheerful at meals or more amiable in his diversions.' His correspondence tells of the festivities in which he took part, and which were often given by his uncle Cornelius van Sypesteyn. He there met all his cousins, with other young men and girls of the same age. The poetical relaxa-

[1] *Duncaniana*, vol. iii., 1672. Royal Library at the Hague.

[2] Schotel, *Oud Hollandsch Huisgezin der zeventiende Eeuw*, 1868.

[3] *Duncaniana*, vol. ii., 1672. *Historisch verhaal*, 1655–1672. See Bilderdyck, vol. x. p. 236.

tions in which John de Witt liked to join formed the principal amusement at the meetings. One of his contemporaries calls him the master of the seven liberal arts; another speaks of the success he would have had as a 'tuneful poet,' had he chosen to occupy himself with poetry. Anxious, no doubt, to obtain other approbation than that of his father's friends, he followed the example given him by those around him. He wrote for the 'Dordrecht Bazaar,' or 'Noah's Ark,' one of the literary productions of his native town, intended probably for young girls, some elegant lines, in which, however, lightness of touch is generally wanting. He used an easily recognised pseudonym; translating into Latin his name of De Witt, he signed himself *Candidus*. These attempts were followed by a more serious work—the translation into Dutch of Corneille's Horace.[1] John de Witt might have seen the great poet's tragedies acted in France during his travels. He had certainly heard them at the French theatre, which the Stadtholder William II. and his father Frederick Henry had established at the Hague. Nevertheless, as he dedicated his work under the name of 'Charles,' to the celebrated Amsterdam actor Charles van Gerrnis, of whom no doubt he had taken lessons in declamation, and to whom he applied to get it printed, he probably preferred to remain unknown.

As he intended to enter public life, it was for his interest to respect the scruples of the presbytery of Dordrecht, which severely condemned the theatre, and scarcely tolerated a few representations at fair time. He therefore contented himself by putting his initials, J. J. Z. D. J.—that is to say, John, Jacob's Zoon (Jacob's son), Doctor of Law. The translation was, however, later attributed to him without dispute. The piece thus translated was often played at Amsterdam, and the first publication was followed by four other editions. One of these editions bears in full the name of John de Witt.

This simple designation, unaccompanied by any title, fixes the identity of the author, and forbids its being taken for that of an obscure namesake. However it may be, this trans-

[1] See Veegens, *Notice sur l'Horace de Corneille par de Witt*, and Schotel's *De illustre School te Dordrecht*, p. 77, and *Soirées tilbourgeoises*, p. 129.

lation does not add much to the fame of John de Witt, nor do much honour to his poetical genius. It merely serves to show his knowledge of the French language and literature.[1] Preceded by a high-flown and pretentious sonnet, it is mostly cold and colourless, and spoils the concise eloquence of the model by misplaced elaborations.[2] Nevertheless the lines run smoothly, there is no want of harmony in the rhythm, and when the author keeps to his text he renders the French lines in all their masculine energy. Some passages, such as Camille's imprecations, have preserved all their native beauty in the foreign language. This translation has, moreover, one merit, which is a sufficient recommendation; it was the first work of a young man of three and twenty.

John de Witt had no leisure to perfect himself in the art of poetry. Time equally failed him to acquire those merits as a writer which are generally wanting in his public and private correspondence. Ignorant of the art of polishing and adorning his style, he neglected the use of those refinements of expression and studied elegancies or classical quotations familiar to some of his contemporaries. He always wrote as he would have spoken, without giving any colouring to his thoughts, only intent on using the term which could best lead him straight to his point, although he could be pleasing and persuasive as well as stern or bitter. Being always thoroughly master of what he wanted to say, and stating it clearly, he only wished to make himself understood.[3] Neither his letters nor his other writings contributed to his literary renown.

The events to which his father so nearly fell a victim called the young lawyer from his poetry to the stage on which he was so soon to become illustrious. He found himself engaged in struggling with the trials of public life, and ready to bear them with precocious vigour. The imprisonment of his father, following on the coup d'état attempted by William III., pledged

[1] Scheltema, *Mengelwerke*, vol. iii. p. 119.

[2] The famous *Qu'il mourût* is paraphrased in the lines: 'What would you have him do?—At least, I would not have him take flight, but rather voluntarily give himself over to death.'

[3] Veegens, *John de Witt als publiciste*, *De Gids*, 1867.

him irrevocably from his first entry into political life to opposition to the stadtholdership.

Transported as a prisoner of State with his five colleagues to the Castle of Loevenstein in the night of August 1–2, 1650,[1] Jacob de Witt seemed in danger of sharing the fate of Olden Barneveldt and of Grotius. His children must have dreaded for him, if not the condemnation to which the first was a victim, at least the perpetual imprisonment which Grotius would have suffered but for his escape. Jacob de Witt employed the first hours of his captivity in reassuring them in a letter which gave them an account of his arrest, and which he addressed to Cornelius de Witt. As it had to pass through the hands of his gaolers, who had orders to show it to the Prince of Orange, he avoided all recriminations which might have tended to compromise him; and to avert the anxiety of his family he expressed great confidence, strengthened by his religious faith. His Christian resignation helped him to preserve his strength of mind, which is shown in the following proud words: 'Be you equally courageous, and do nothing towards my deliverance but what is honest and proper, having the fear of the Lord always before your eyes.'

The sons to whom he made this appeal were worthy recipients of it. Deprived of news of their father, whose letter had not yet been delivered to them, and alarmed as to his fate, they had started in haste to be near him. They had no knowledge of the notice which Jacob de Witt had hastened to give them, by warning them in a postscript to his letter 'that it would be useless for them to come, no one being as yet admitted into his presence;' but even when they had convinced themselves that they would be refused admittance they were not discouraged.

Whilst Cornelius de Witt returned to Dordrecht to take part in the deliberations in justification of his father's conduct, and to negotiate for his release,[2] John de Witt remained in

[1] For the correspondence between Jacob de Witt and his sons during his imprisonment, see *De Gids*, 1845, article de M. Von Hasselt; *De Gids*, 1867, article de M. Veegens, and Archives of the House of Orange, Groen Van Prinsterer, vol. iv. p. 396.

[2] Aitzema, *Zaken van Staat*, vol. iii. p. 451.

the neighbourhood of the fortress. He was lodged at an inn bearing the sign 'Au Vaisseau de son Altesse.'

His first attempt to obtain access to the prisoner met with complete success. He managed to convey to him a private letter giving him the information necessary for his defence. He succeeded afterwards in getting into the prison, and had a first interview with his father, in the presence of the commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Meteren, thus contriving to have remitted, or to elude, the order forbidding any visits.

John de Witt hastened to give an account of this successful attempt in a letter to his brother also unpublished, and which enables us to follow him step by step. 'This morning at six o'clock,' he writes to him, after having begun by telling him of his secret correspondence with his father, 'I went to the castle accompanied by the commandant, to whom the messenger from Dordrecht had just delivered a letter addressed to our lord and father by the magistrates of the town. After he had read it, I received permission to enter his room. There, standing before his bed, in the presence of the commandant, I conversed with him for a long time. I shall remain until the arrival of further news, and I feel quite confident that I shall again find an opportunity of secretly conveying notice of it to our father.'

This correspondence continued, whether with or without the knowledge of the commandant. 'Very dear and beloved children,' wrote Jacob de Witt, 'I have learnt with pleasure by yours of the 10th ultimo that there is a chance of matters being arranged. I am certain that it will come right, and I have no doubt that the deputies of Dordrecht will help us as much as possible. I wait patiently. I am in good humour and very well, of that you may assure yourselves. I am always your affectionate father.'

A fortnight after the arrest of their father, Jacob de Witt's two sons, by a letter from the Prince of Orange to the commandant of Loevenstein, received permission to be admitted to him. 'You will allow them,' he writes, 'to converse for two or three hours with their father, the soldiers remaining at the

door of the room, but you will not permit these young men to see any of the other prisoners.'

Six days later Jacob de Witt was set at liberty, after an imprisonment of three weeks. The submission of the town councils who had consented to receive the resignation of the imprisoned deputies had satisfied the Prince of Orange. The magistrates of Dordrecht, after having opposed an obstinate resistance, ended by giving way; Jacob de Witt having let them know 'that he resigned his municipal offices, without prejudice to the honour and reputation of his family, because he could not conform himself to the present conjuncture of affairs.'

His sons, interested as they were in his release, were none the less resolved to make no act of submission to attain it. They held their father's honour at a higher price even than his deliverance. A contemporary states 'that, exhorted to address a demand to the Prince of Orange that the prisoner might be set at liberty, they refused, declaring that they would not, by interceding for him, appear to place their father in the light of a culprit.' This is no imaginary account; a letter from John de Witt to his brother confirms it.[1] He strongly urges upon him to send the order of release to his father, either by Berck, secretary to the town of Dordrecht,[2] or by some other delegate from the municipal commune, 'so as to show,' he writes, 'that it is the town of Dordrecht alone that has treated with the Prince.' 'It is of importance,' he adds, 'not to let it be supposed that we have ourselves taken part in the negotiations, which should be avoided at any cost for the preservation of the reputation of our lord and father, and even for the reputation of the country.' For the same reason he hastened to Dordrecht to prevent the vessel destined to bring back his father from being despatched before the arrival of the messenger who was to convey to him the order for his release. 'I cannot think the matter so pressing,'

[1] Letter from John de Witt to Cornelius de Witt, August 17, 1650. Royal Archives.

[2] It is by mistake, no doubt, that Berck is spoken of as pensionary. The pensionary was Ruysch. Berck was a son by her second marriage of John de Witt's maternal grandmother - Maria Büysen.

he writes, 'as to justify the risk of causing any scandal for the sake of gaining a little time.' John de Witt thus subdued, by the inflexible honesty of his political opinions, the impatience of his filial affection; in the same way that, once intrusted with the first magistracy of the republic, he subordinated all his feelings and interests to the service of his cause and his country.

Jacob de Witt's disgrace, softened as it was by the most flattering testimonials from the magistrates of Dordrecht, was, moreover, but a passing ordeal. Two months and a half after his removal from the town council, the unexpected death of William II. reopened to him the path of honours. At the same time it assured to his son, by a sudden turn of fortune, a compensation for the persecution which he had suffered. The letter[1] in which John de Witt gives an account of the event which was to decide his destiny is curious to read. It is addressed to his uncle, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, and is thus expressed: 'H.H. the Prince of Orange died yesterday evening, between eight and half-past. God keep his soul! His condition seemed to show that all danger was over. The pastor, Stermont, was sent for to him. Some say that he was then unconscious; others that he showed great resignation, and that the pastor having recited some prayers, and asking him if he understood and had trust in them, his Highness answered distinctly "Yes," and shortly expired.' De Witt winds up by praying God 'that so unforeseen an event may tend to the public welfare.' He was eager to turn it to his father's interest. No delay should, he thought, be suffered in restoring Jacob de Witt to his municipal functions. 'An adjournment,' he writes to him, 'would do harm to your lordship's reputation, because, if it were permitted, the council would seem to approve of what had passed, while there is now no fear of violent measures, which could oblige them to deprive you of the exercise of your functions.' At the end of the month he is glad to acquaint one of his relations that 'within the first week which followed the Stadtholder's death

[1] November 7, 1650, Collection Hoog, from the Royal Archives. See account of the Prince's last moments by Pasteur Stermont, Aitzema, vol. iii. p. 457.

his father had re-entered the Assembly of the States of Holland to resume the seat which belonged to him.' He could not fail himself to profit by this signal reparation of his father's disgrace. The death of the Prince of Orange caused the removal of the obstacle which would have shut him out during his youth from the threshold of public life. He was not slow to take advantage of it. The nomination of the Pensionary of Dordrecht, Nicholas Ruysch, to the post of Registrar to the States-General left vacant an office which tempted his ambition. It was at the disposal of the two burgomasters of the town, and his personal qualities as well as his family connections caused it to be confided to him.

He fulfilled the conditions exacted by the Council of Dordrecht, who required of their pensionaries a knowledge of French and Latin and the degree of Doctor of Law.

The office with which he was invested gave to the holder the title of pensionary, because it was remunerated by an annual pension. It demanded many and solid acquirements, as well as great powers of speech.[1]

In fact, the pensionaries of the Dutch towns had become their principal representatives. They had at first filled no other functions than those of jurisconsults, either to be commissioned as advocates with law-suits relating to the affairs of the commune, or to help with their advice the sheriffs or elective judges of the city, who were chosen by the magistrates and often unacquainted with the study of the law. They had gradually obtained admission to the sittings of the Council as well as to the meetings of the burgomasters, and gave their opinions on all questions concerning either the municipal rights or the constitution of the country. They had added to their original attributions prerogatives much more extended, those of political power, in acquiring the right of accompanying the deputies from the town council to the States of Holland. Being almost always charged to speak in their name, they could the more easily assume to themselves the principal authority as they had a permanent right to a seat in the Assembly of the

[1] Moens, p. 67. *Thèse, De Munere pensionariorum civitatum*, Leyden, 1789.

Provinces, whilst the other deputies, sent by the magistrates of the towns, were constantly changed.

In a government enjoying freedom of debate and where oratory was the instrument of power, they were naturally pointed out for the confidence of the State.

The Pensionary of Dordrecht, by reason of that town ranking first at the sittings, had the privilege of replacing the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

It was not, therefore, any subordinate post that John de Witt was about to occupy. He started in public life with functions which naturally led up to the higher rank to which he was soon to be raised. From his earliest youth he had seen freely opening before him that career as a statesman which was to be so gloriously filled and so tragically ended.

The events which tended towards his rapid fortune involved him in the political career which he followed up to his death.

His father's disgrace left a vivid impression on his mind, and Jacob de Witt had taken pleasure in strengthening it.

If one may put faith in rather doubtful evidence,[1] he often entered upon the subject with his sons, saying, 'Remember the prison of Loevenstein.' Nevertheless, John de Witt was too high-minded and intelligent to allow his conduct to be governed by private wrongs. It was in the interest of Holland that he meant to serve by opposing the maintenance of the stadtholder's powers, of which William II. had made use in a manner which threatened the independence of the province, and which it seemed to him must inevitably be abused by the Orange party during the minority of his son.

The power which devolved upon him in his capacity as Pensionary of Dordrecht, and the still recent recollection of the persecution of his father, were guarantees for his influence in the great Assembly which had just instituted the new government of the Confederation. He played an active part in its deliberations, and in the mission with which he was entrusted soon gave evidence of that talent of persuasion with which he was gifted, and which was soon to help him in

[1] *Mémoires de Guiche*, vi. Introduction, p. 50.

governing the republic. Despatched with three other deputies of the States of Holland to the States of Zealand, he spoke in their name[1] in the Assembly of that province, to dissuade them from appointing William II.'s son to be Admiral and Captain-General. The memoir with which he furnished them represented the inutility of giving to a child a power which he could not himself exercise and the danger of a premature engagement dispensing the young prince from proving himself worthy of public confidence. At the same time, to give satisfaction to Zealand, De Witt was instructed to promise that Holland would not proceed to the nomination of an admiral and captain-general without some preliminary agreement. This assurance, which guaranteed the young prince against the competition of any other candidate to the military command, happily re-established concord.

John de Witt soon acquired fresh titles to the sympathies of the party he was about to lead. When the Grand Pensionary Cats made known to the deputies of Holland the memoir in which William II. sought to justify his coup d'état, he was instructed to report upon it. He proposed to reply to this apology, not only by energetic protestations, but also by pressing demands to the States-General to suppress the resolutions, in which the Federal Assembly had pronounced in favour of the late Stadtholder's undertaking. The States of Holland prudently qualifying the conclusion of this report, preferred to wait for that satisfaction from the States-General, which was soon offered to them spontaneously. They contented themselves with publishing the refutation of the Stadtholder's memorandum, and with giving a formal approval of the conduct of the deputies whom William II. had deprived of their office. John de Witt had thus the good fortune to obtain justice for the outrage done to his father, as well as to the States of his province, and to satisfy at once the private and public grievances, which made him consider that change of government had given him his revenge. Nevertheless his firmness did not exclude moderation, as he proved

[1] Aitzema, *Zaken van Staat*, vol. iii. p. 560.

by the part he took in the vote of amnesty accorded to the accomplices in the late Stadtholder's coup d'état. One of his correspondents in Zealand, Justus de Huybert, a member of the regency of Middleburg, congratulated him on having, like his father, contributed with such wisdom, prudence, and decision to the happy work of re-establishing order in the republic. His political foresight was equally manifested by the part he took in the resolutions designed to consolidate the power of the States of Holland, it was upon his report that the governors and magistrates were bound to take an oath to them, and in thus contributing to the recognition of their supreme authority he soon found himself in a position to exercise it himself in their name.

One year after his nomination as pensionary of Dordrecht, the office of first minister of his province was open to him, and power, so to speak, came to meet him half-way. The day on which the Grand Assembly dispersed, the pensionary of Holland, Jacob Cats, aged seventy-three, more celebrated as a poet than as a statesman, had resigned. He fell upon his knees before the whole House[1] to thank God for permitting him to give up his office in peace, and retired to his little property near the Hague to finish the popular work of his 'Fables.' His successor, Pauw d'Heemstede, who had already, once before Cats, exercised the functions of Grand Pensionary, in the course of which he had incurred the enmity of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, was with difficulty persuaded to accept a second nomination. He only yielded to the entreaties of the States of Holland, who appealed to his patriotism. Scarcely had he entered on his office than the States-General, hoping to avert the imminent danger of a war with England, sent him on an embassy to London in spite of his repugnance to absent himself.[2] During his absence, De Witt, in his capacity as pensionary of Dordrecht, was summoned to replace him. This short tenure of government, lasting scarcely more than a month, sufficed for him to prove that the conduct

[1] *Hollandsch Mercurius*, September 1651. Resolution of the States of Holland, September 27, 1651.

[2] Resolutions of the States-General, June 13, 1652.

of public affairs might safely be entrusted to him. Moreover, when the Grand Pensionary Pauw returned, De Witt continued to assist him, remaining in charge of the diplomatic correspondence. He was thus beginning his apprenticeship to the first magistracy of the republic when a new occasion offered of distinguishing himself and adding lustre to his growing reputation.

The government which the Great Assembly had just established was again called in question. Zealand, which had with difficulty been restrained the previous year, gave formidable signs of a popular rising for the purpose of forcing upon the States-General the re-establishment of the Prince of Orange's authority, if not as Stadtholder, at least as Admiral and Captain-General, with Count William of Nassau as lieutenant. The deputies of Middleburg were commissioned by their town council, who were governed by the seditious party, to transmit this proposition to the States of Zealand.

Fearing thenceforth that the other provinces, secretly encouraged by the Count of Nassau,[1] might respond to the appeal, the States-General hastened to check at its outset this sudden reaction. They sent commissioners to the States of Zealand to convey to them the most urgent remonstrances. John de Witt, who had already succeeded, during the Grand Assembly, with the negotiations with that province, was by common consent chosen to make one of the deputation. Arrived with his colleagues at Middleburg on August 31, 1652, after crossing a country disturbed by popular demonstrations, De Witt urged the re-assembling of the States of Zealand. But before they were assembled, the populace of Middleburg had already risen, 'taking the bit between its teeth,' as De Witt wrote to his father, in giving him an account of his mission. 'Many people had warned us,' he added in the same letter, 'that the population here had been conspiring and intended to massacre us, either on our entrance into or on our leaving the Assembly. Nevertheless, measures having been

[1] See letters of Mauregnault to the Prince of Nassau, July and August 1652. Sypesteyn, *Geschiedkundige Bijdragen*, vol. i. Bijlage, pp. 192-208.

taken for our safety, we felt it our duty to acquit ourselves of our commission.'

To leave them more at liberty to proceed with caution, the deputies of Holland had been apparently charged only with the settlement of certain matters interesting the two provinces, and altogether foreign to the resolutions relative to the nomination of the Prince of Orange; but the inhabitants, easily guessing the object of their mission, and resolved to oppose it, surrounded the house where they were lodged. 'The dispositions in which we found the people here,' writes John de Witt, with good-humoured banter, 'have caused us to observe that they would willingly prevent our being annoyed by the fevers of Zealand or any other malady, so much so, that they would spare us the expense of our return and of provisioning our vessel for the journey. But fortunately the States of Zealand have made all arrangements necessary for our arriving in their Assembly with whole skins.'

The town council, which was half an accomplice in the sedition, gave them to understand that they acknowledged themselves incapable of protecting them, and recommended them to avert by a prompt retreat the danger to which their lives were exposed.

The firmness of the deputies of Holland was shaken. They consulted together as to whether they should not retire and send their proposals in writing to the States of Zealand. They would, no doubt, have preferred this more timid expedient, had not John de Witt courageously represented to them that they would fail alike in their duty and honour if they succumbed to violence. He declared his determination to execute the commands of his sovereigns the States, even if his colleagues would not venture with him. His proud resolve restored their confidence, and they determined to proceed to the Assembly of the States of the province. Nevertheless, combining prudence with courage and justly doubtful of the measures taken for their security, they sent for some officers and men from the neighbouring garrisons, to insure them the protection of an armed force.

Under this escort, the deputies of Holland made their way

through the crowd without troubling themselves about its outcries. They escaped the fury of a populace thirsting for blood, 'who,' says De Witt, 'would have massacred me had it not been for the assistance of one of my colleagues;' and entered the Abbey of Middleburg, where the States were sitting, to communicate to them the instructions they had received. They made the most of the necessity of preserving unity between the two provinces; they dwelt upon the assurance given the year before by Holland, which had undertaken to make no proposals for the re-establishment of the office of Captain-General without a previous understanding with Zealand, and energetically demanded that no notice should be taken of the proposition of the deputies of Middleburg. It was nevertheless submitted to the town councils.

Uneasy at such a concession to popular exactions, the deputies of Holland returned to give an account of their mission. Their fears were soon realised. The resolution which called for the nomination of the Prince of Orange as Admiral and Captain-General was voted for by the States of Zealand, and elicited the strongest remonstrances from John de Witt, addressed to the secretary of their Assembly, Justus de Huybert.

'The resolution of the States of Zealand having been communicated to me,' he writes to him, 'I must acknowledge in my own name, as well as in that of the deputies of the other provinces with whom I have conferred on this subject, my astonishment at not finding in it any sign of the harmonious relations so long maintained with Zealand.' 'It even seems to me,' he adds, 'to be inspired, in several clauses, by a desire of recrimination in regard to Holland. As to the truth of its accusations, I leave them to the judgment of those who are disturbing the peace, and who for some time past have forced me to be a witness of unjust and inopportune measures. At all events, they do not appear to me to be what one would have expected from the wisdom and prudence of the States of Zealand.'

Still the stand made by the deputies of Holland was not

without result. It prevented the States of Zealand from communicating to the States-General the determination to which they had come. They contented themselves with sending their deputies, MM. de Mauregnault, De Tholen, and Stavenisse, the pensionary of Flushing, to the Hague, where they entered into communication with the States of Holland. The latter gave acting powers to several commissioners, amongst whom was De Witt, in his capacity of pensionary of Dordrecht. He speaks of the Zealand negotiators as 'three hot-headed young fellows,' although he congratulates himself on their courtesy, good manners, and friendly deference. He strongly urged them to set about the reconciliation of the two provinces and moderating their impetuosity, whilst prolonging for six weeks the conferences on which he was to report. To make this report more conclusive, the States of Holland added a manifesto, which was also given into his hands, and was unanimously approved. They recalled to mind the undertaking of the provinces in the Great Assembly of 1651—to leave vacant the post of captain-general, unless in case of necessity. They stated that nothing appeared to them to call for its re-establishment, as there was no army in the field, and declared that the military power would not without detriment be placed in the hands of a child. They also declared against the nomination of the Count of Nassau as lieutenant to William II.'s son, calling to mind the fresh jealousies which might result between the two branches of the House of Orange, but made no allusion to any grievance on account of the Stadtholder's coup d'état, that they might not be supposed to be irreconcilable.

This policy of resistance without provocation was successful. 'I hope,' writes De Witt, 'that the affair of the captain-general will no longer interrupt the deliberations of the States of Holland. The zeal of its promoters is greatly cooling down, and its hopes of success have been seemingly destroyed by the unanimity with which the Assembly opposes itself to all change of government.' In thus baffling the attempts of Zealand, which alone could give the signal for an Orange

restoration, De Witt had secured to himself the gratitude of his province, which recognised in him a most energetic defender of the new government. The perils which he had braved made his intrepidity conspicuous; and the difficulties which he had just overcome, during the progress of the conferences now happily ended, no less contributed to the appreciation of his merits as a negotiator. The part which he took in the direction of foreign affairs, in the committees charged with the negotiations with England and with the other Powers, completed the precocious pledges which he gave of his political experience. The surname of 'The Wisdom of Holland' had already been bestowed on him, when, at eight-and-twenty, less than a year after his mission to Zealand, he was chosen by the States of Holland to be their prime minister.

The Grand Pensionary of the province, Adrien Pauw d'Heemstede, had just died at the age of sixty-eight, after a short ministry of eighteen months. The States of Holland were not yet assembled when his illness again obliged him to delegate his functions to his usual assistant. The councillor deputies, hoping perhaps for his recovery, postponed for some days the convocation of the Assembly. But on the afternoon of the day on which the States resumed their sittings they received the news of his decease, and on the following day they adjourned all resolutions until after his funeral. The choice of John de Witt was so pointed out, both by his special position as pensionary of Dordrecht and by the personal influence which he exercised over the Assembly, that the councillor deputies waited to summon the States until he was at liberty to come, according to custom, and direct their debates. By a unanimous vote he was at once elected to fill the place which the death of the Grand Pensionary left vacant, and to exercise its functions until a successor had been definitely named.

His father's encouragement was not wanting. Jacob de Witt, who had not yet returned from a diplomatic mission which he was fulfilling at Lübeck, wrote to him: 'In the event of their casting their eyes on you, it would be better, in my opinion, not to stand out too seriously, only to express some

modest doubts, and to leave the authorities of Dordrecht to conduct the affair as may seem best to them.'

It was a formidable task which John de Witt had to fulfil. He found the United Provinces engaged in a war with England, under the weight of which they were in danger of sinking, and he took up the heavy burden of power at a time as critical for the maintenance of the new government as for the independence of his country. When the States of Holland reassembled for their summer sitting, there could be no further hesitation in definitely bestowing upon him the office of Grand Pensionary. Nevertheless, after having made out the instructions for the benefit of the minister whom they were about to elect, they prepared a list of nine candidates all qualified as Doctors of Law. The deputies of Dordrecht, out of deference to the scruples of their pensionary, were the only ones who named Ruyl, the pensionary of Haarlem, one of the deputies imprisoned by the late Stadtholder, but all the other votes were given to John de Witt. He was thus summoned by a first election, destined to be three times renewed, to undertake functions which demanded the consecration and sacrifice of his life to the interests of the republic. Before accepting them, he was obliged to obtain the authority of the Council of Dordrecht, and to be relieved of the oath by which he had engaged to accept no other employment than that of pensionary of that town. This formality was promptly complied with, and a few days later, on July 30, 1653, his nomination was unanimously sanctioned. 'He is a young man, under thirty years of age,' writes the French ambassador, 'and who already possesses such fine qualities, as, brought out by this very important situation, may hereafter render him eminent.'

He had not sought this post. Fearing the formidable task confided to his youth, he was rather disposed to refuse it, in spite of the legitimate ambition which so tempting an offer of power might awaken even in the most modest of men. He only accepted it as a public service, which was imposed upon him and which he could not evade. The letter in which he informs his father of his nomination gives proof of his

indecision. 'Sir and Father,' he writes, 'their Noble Mightinesses have to-day asked, and unanimously voted me, to fill the vacant office of pensionary of Holland. Thereupon I have asked and obtained some days for reflection on this important matter, and also to confer with you as well as with the magistrates of Dordrecht, to whom I owe obedience and respect; to which end, their Noble Mightinesses having given me permission to make a journey to Dordrecht, I intend to start to-morrow, of which I will also give notice to my brother, who is now in Amsterdam, and I have no doubt that on receipt of the letter he will immediately go to Dordrecht. I ask you, quitting all other business, to go there at once, and I conclude, confident in your doing so.' 'I have conferred,' he writes a few days later to Van Beuningen, 'with the burgomasters and magistrates of the town of Dordrecht, as well as with my nearest relations, as to the heavy charge to which their Noble Mightinesses have been pleased to call me, and all have encouraged me to take this burden upon me, in spite of the troubled times.' The fatal destiny which awaited him had been predicted. Amongst his brethren at the bar 'there were some,' says a memoir of the time,[1] 'who shook their heads, saying, "This young man flies too high; he will not die a natural death."'

He must often have thought over the grave counsel addressed to him at the end of an encouraging letter by the friend and companion of his father's captivity in the castle of Loevenstein, the Deputy Keyser, who wrote to him: 'Once become Grand Pensionary, it should be a matter of indifference to you whether you are put into your coffin whole or in pieces.' De Witt proved himself to his last day to be one of those who trouble themselves little as to whether they live or die at their post, provided they have valiantly and faithfully done their duty.

In default of memoirs which he had no time to leave, his private correspondence, as it is preserved in the family papers and in the registers of the archives, allows us to follow him

[1] *Historisch Verhaal*, van C. en J. de Witt, 1677. Royal Library at the Hague.

in his home life after his entry on his functions, and to live again, so to speak, in intimacy with him. In spite of a somewhat ceremonious reserve, which is rarely absent, it omits no details, even the most familiar, of his daily life. It shows us the man himself, and this knowledge of the man is of no less importance to history than that of the events in which he took part.

The exercise of power in no way altered the simplicity of taste which was habitual to him, and strengthened rather than loosened his family ties. Once elected Grand Pensionary of Holland, he had quitted the quarters of the deputies of Dordrecht, called the White House, where he had till then resided, and established himself in a large house resembling a fortress, of which he no doubt occupied but a portion. His private fortune, which only amounted to 10,000 florins, according to his declaration on the tax papers, and his salary, which did not exceed 3,000 florins, obliged him to content himself with a very modest establishment. The direction of his household was confided to the care of his eldest sister, Johanna, eight years older than himself, who had married Beveren de Zwyndrecht, and had always testified the most tender solicitude for him. He commissioned her to procure for him the necessary furniture. For the sake of economy she sent him furniture purchased second-hand at Dordrecht, bought him the requisite linen, and sent him his provisions, to which later his father added a supply of wine. She had found for him a trustworthy and hard-working maid-servant, who sufficed for the internal care of the house, and advised her brother 'to give her help once a week, so that the work should not be too hard for her.' When he wished to buy some horses, one of his uncles, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, adjured him not to stick at a high price, 'being,' he said, 'of opinion that such an equipage was a part of his gilded slavery.' John de Witt, on the contrary, preferred 'to procure for the sum of forty or fifty florins some horses which would not be too spirited and would not cost him so much. As to the coachman, he proposed to employ him in looking after the garden and in doing commissions.'

His correspondence furnishes the most touching proofs of his father's assistance. Jacob de Witt corrected his son's first political letters, supplied him with notes, and gave him counsels of moderation and prudence. Sometimes he urges him to avoid useless collisions, and suggests to him precautions to be taken to satisfy the council of Dordrecht; sometimes he warns him to mistrust certain connections; and John de Witt, with docility to this advice, answers that he will be on his guard. His maternal uncle, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, also evinced the strongest regard for him. 'I am at your service,' he writes, 'and I shall always be happy to do anything for you, for the sake of the affectionate regard we shall bear for you to our lives' end. I know of no one in the world, excepting my wife, who would so willingly be of use to you as I would, and the love which Orestes testified to his friend when he said, "Me, me, adsum qui feci: in me convertite ferrum," is not more than what I feel for you. I pray God that you may never be unfortunate enough to have to test it.' Cornelius van Sypesteyn had acquired a large fortune by cultivating the dunes, and possessed a country house at Hillegem, between Leyden and Haarlem, where he liked to exercise hospitality. He collected the most agreeable people there, and often arranged shooting parties in which John de Witt and his brother Cornelius used to take part. 'It seems,' he writes to his nephew, 'that you are so much taken up with tending your goats and lambs that you no longer care to come here and look after the young shepherdesses.' A few years later Cornelius de Witt writes to his brother that 'he is sorry not to meet him at his uncle's, that they might shoot rabbits together, try a first-rate basset and hunt with ferrets.'

When John de Witt could afford himself a holiday, it was at Hillegem that he went to spend it. He often thanked his uncle for the pleasure the latter had given him, and, wishing to prove the interest he took in his game, he sent him a bill, passed by the States, which he had brought forward for the destruction of birds of prey.

Public affairs did not prevent the young minister from keeping up the closest intimacy with his numerous relations.

He often wrote to them to give them the benefit of his advice and assistance, and even sent one of them legal opinions in Latin. He still took pleasure in family gatherings, as his correspondence shows. He received in the following terms an invitation from one of his aunts, Maria Van de Corput, whose son-in-law Heydanus, a theologian of Leyden had won the friendship of Descartes by his defence of his philosophy. 'I must tell you,' she writes to her nephew, 'that my son-in-law has a great desire to see you at his table with a few professors. But he knows so well how precious your time is, that he only dares to write to you through me. If you will at your convenience grant him a Saturday or any other day, he would be glad to know the evening before, to send out a few invitations.'

When it is a question of a wedding, to which John de Witt was unable to go, because he had been called upon the day before to exercise provisionally the office of Grand Pensionary, 'I should have been in my element,' he writes, 'and you know me well enough to be aware that under such circumstances I am as much at my ease as a fish in the water.'

The world had also great attractions for him, and he took pleasure in affairs of gallantry after the fashion of French society in the seventeenth century. Amongst the great ladies of the Hague there were several who used to apply to him, as humble clients, to obtain some favour or employment for their relations. He kept up correspondence with them, in which he generally employed French, which was the language of refined society. He showed the most graceful readiness to listen to their requests. When his scruples did not allow of his satisfying them, he took the greatest pains to preserve their good graces.

Sophia Margaret of Nassau had made him feel the charm of her society at the balls of the Hague. A grand-daughter of a brother of William I. and sister of John Maurice, governor of Brazil, she was still unmarried when at forty-three she first met John de Witt. Her brother, Count Henry of Nassau, commandant of the town of Hulst, had just died,

and she was anxious that the company which he had commanded for twenty years should be given to his son, her nephew William of Nassau. She earnestly sought the favour of John de Witt, begging him to continue his friendliness to a family 'which,' she writes, 'is called not Orange, but Nassau.' She took great pains to keep herself aloof from the family which was shut out from power, and made the most urgent appeal to the good-will of the Grand Pensionary, reminding him at the same time of the payment of the pension which had been for five years owing to her sister-in-law. She told him that if he did not entertain this petition he would lose the good opinion she had of him, and promised to prove her gratitude by a work of her own hands, which she hoped he would keep as a remembrance. A month later she sent it to him, adding a note in French verse, which ended thus—

Et ne sera jamais dit
Que je me dédie,
Tant que j'aurai de vie,
Votre très fidèle amie.

De Witt, who in conformity with his instructions refused all presents of whatever nature, did not feel at liberty to keep a gift to which he nevertheless attached great value. 'Had I robbed you of what it pleased you in your goodness and generosity to send me,' he writes to the princess, 'I should feel no weight on my conscience; I should keep it all my life as having belonged to one whom I can never forget, treasuring up always what comes from her as I now guard and cherish for ever what I stole from you on that joyful night we lately passed together. But permit me, I beseech you, to remain an honest man, and not to break a promise which I have made and confirmed by a solemn oath. That you may not impute to ingratitude or a want of affection what arises from absolute necessity, I here send you (with the enclosure, which only leaves me drawing my heart with it) an extract from the instructions which are my law, and, though reasonable under all other circumstances, very hard in this one.' He announced to her at the same time the postponement of

her sister-in-law's petition, 'which,' he says, 'will be no pleasanter to you than to me.'

To avoid incurring her displeasure he offers her a watch, 'to pay,' he writes to her, 'what I owe you since the fair at the Hague.' 'Deprived of the satisfaction of her presence,' he commissions Admiral Obdam tc give her this present, and winds up his letter with a compliment which bears the impress of the affected tone of the time. 'This moveable instrument should be the more agreeable to you since you have this in common with others of your sex, that mobility is not disagreeable to you, of which I have had proofs at those assemblies where dancing and sporting were the pastimes.'

The correspondence of John de Witt with Baroness Amelia de Slavatha gives us a no less interesting insight into his first youthful inclinations.

The Baroness de Slavatha was the daughter of Major-General Bréderode, whose support was of great importance to John de Witt. She presided at the gatherings so often held at his uncle's, Cornelius van Sypesteyn, and held the title of Grand Mistress of the Order of the Union of Mirth, a society which had for its aim the most varied social amusements. De Witt was too anxious to belong to it to excuse himself from the demands made upon him by the Baroness Slavatha. 'Madam,' he writes, 'if it were permissible in a poor knight, who is only admitted into your order by a great piece of luck which Heaven has most unexpectedly sent him, to express what he thinks of the actions of the Grand Mistress, I should say that you do injustice to your greatness by using terms of supplication towards one whom you have the right to command, from which I should fear that you doubt my promptitude in obeying your behests. Never can I have greater happiness than when I succeed in the undertaking and execution of something which I know will please you, praying God to create occasions more favourable than those you mention, so as to confirm the above, not by words only but by deeds, and begging you therefore to honour me with your commands, always and whenever you deem me capable of rendering you some service. Do not again, then, use any supplications or prayers, although

your prayers always stand to me in place of commands, but treat me as I am, in truth, your very humble and obedient servant.'

Another time, De Witt again takes the opportunity of pleasing her by obtaining, according to her wish, three months' leave for her husband, a cavalry captain in the service of the States, and he promises to have it extended if Baron Slavatha's affairs should keep him in Germany.

'Your attractions,' he writes, 'and the feelings which the recollections of your marvellous beauties must awake in M. de Slavatha, will no doubt spare me the trouble of working for this extension, as the same beauties, and a thousand other qualities which I admire in you, give me life, and leave me ever in your service.' Some years later, when Baroness Slavatha lost her husband, he hastens to offer her his condolences. 'I admit,' he says, 'that the loss you have sustained is irreparable for you, but as it is also inevitable, and as God gave you time to prepare for it, I do not doubt that with the strength of mind and good sense which appear in all your actions He will have equally given you the force and determination necessary to resist such severe trials.'

We must not, however, look for the expression of a youthful passion in this correspondence. In fact, it is by the intervention of Baroness Slavatha that De Witt offers his no less gallant attentions to other ladies, with whom he appears to have been equally fascinated. 'I shall not trouble myself to send my compliments to your coadjutrix,' he writes, 'as I am myself always with her, my soul perpetually rendering her that homage which is her due, although my body, by an inevitable impediment, is absent.' Moreover, these somewhat trifling friendships were but transitory. He needed, on entering on his career as a public man, to ensure himself a peaceful refuge in conjugal life, as in a harbour against a storm. His brother Cornelius had encouraged him in matrimony by his own example. In the month following his father's imprisonment, he had married Maria van Berkel, whose father, John van Berkel, had been receiver-general to the province of Holland, and whose mother, Elizabeth Prince,

belonged to one of the noble families of Rotterdam. Only eighteen years of age, she was already gifted with an imposing style of beauty which was the visible sign of a strong mind and a firm will. Her hair, which she wore in a coronet round her head, her brilliant complexion, her great black eyes, shining with a glowing light, her somewhat full but bright red lips, her splendid figure, her majestic bearing, all betokened energy. Her portrait, by Van der Werf, as it is preserved by the last descendants of the family, represents her in all the bloom of youth. An orphan on the father's side, she had received a portion of about 10,000 florins. She exercised the greatest power over her husband. The masculine force of her character justified the weight of her advice, and her brother-in-law himself sought it more than once in the correspondence which he kept up with her, recognising thus the superiority of her mind as well as the correctness of her judgment.

Two years had scarcely elapsed since the nomination of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary, when his marriage completed the measure of good fortune which was reserved for his youth. It was to his interest to contract for himself an alliance which would assure to him the support of a political connection in the council of one of the towns of Holland, and he sought one which might best confirm his power by guaranteeing to him the co-operation of the magistrates of Amsterdam. After having vainly paid his attentions to the daughter of one of the former burgomasters, the celebrated physician Nicholas Tulp, he found a more favourable reception from Wendela Bicker, who belonged to one of the principal burgher families in Holland, which was noted for its attachment to the republican party.

The ties of friendship, of services rendered, the recollection of recent trials suffered for the same cause, already united the family of Bicker to that of De Witt. The two elder brothers, Andrew Bicker, an old colleague of Jacob de Witt in his embassies to the northern courts, and Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, had both distinguished themselves by their patriotic resistance to the Stadtholder William II. Their wealth made them sovereigns of the Amsterdam Exchange. Cornelius

Bicker van Swieten, after having made his fortune in the India Company, had sold his shares to carry on business on his own account in Brazil, and his profits amounted to more than 100,000 florins a year. Vondel writes in some of his verses that the flag of the Bickers overshadowed the ocean, which was ploughed by their ships, bringing to Holland the golden harvest of far countries. The third brother of this wealthy family, John Bicker, who had taken no part in the events of 1650, had just died in the exercise of his duty as burgomaster, which he had filled in his turn as a sort of fraternal inheritance.

He had married Agneta de Graeff, a sister of two of the principal magistrates of the town, and acquired a large fortune partly by himself and partly through his wife. He had contributed to augment the prosperity of Amsterdam by his undertakings, and his name was given to one of the islands of Holland, Bicker Island. He left five daughters, who had each a portion of 5,000 florins. They spent the first year of their mother's widowhood in their father's country house at Beverwyck. The two eldest were married—one, Elizabeth, to a nephew of her mother's, Jacob Tryp ; the other, Gertrude, to a rich merchant, John Deutz, who had made a contract with Spain to furnish quicksilver to the amount of a million to the Spanish colonies, and to whom John de Witt afterwards confided the charge of his pecuniary affairs. It was upon the third, Wendela, born in 1636, that the Grand Pensionary's choice fell, attracted by the budding charms of her beauty and the gentle amiability of her character. He was most assiduous in his efforts to please her. He speaks in his letters of the weeks during which he was absent from the Hague in Amsterdam, while yet uncertain of succeeding in his suit. When he obtained the desired assent he hastened to show his happiness to his betrothed.

'Although up to this time,' he writes, 'I have, in obedience to a formal though strict order, abstained from writing in this manner, I hope in the future to be able to avail myself of such converse without offending you. Although I have not yet received an express permission, I thought it would not be

disagreeable to you to be informed by this of the arrival, in good will and good health, of him with whom you have in future determined to pass your life in order to insure his happiness. The expectation of this creates much happiness in my soul, and that happiness would be complete were it not troubled by the impatience of my desires. I do all I can to master them, but I find that the nearer I approach to the enjoyment of that blissful day which is promised to me, the more this impatient ardour increases and gets the better of me. If it continues thus to goad me with increasing passion, I fear I shall not pass through this period of waiting without falling ill, unless in my sufferings I am solaced by the sweetness of your presence. I entreat for it, therefore, while endeavouring on my side to enjoy it as soon as possible.'

Apparently Wendela could not conquer her timidity and reserve sufficiently to respond to this declaration. She merely gives her opinion as to the house which she was to occupy, saying that she wished it to be big and warm, but that she thought the one of which a plan was sent her would suit her perfectly. She informs her betrothed at the same time that there is no need to trouble himself about the invitations until the wedding is settled. 'You can ask whom you like,' she writes to him, but takes care to add: 'My mother tells me that the numbers will not be very great.'[1] The marriage was celebrated with much pomp. John de Witt, although accustomed to the austere simplicity of his father's house, had to conform himself to the more elegant customs of his new family.

Wendela Bicker, when she left her mother's house to go to the church, wore a magnificent dress, and was crowned with jewels. She had with her her uncles on both sides, who formed an illustrious retinue. Cornelius Bicker was there, as well as Cornelius and Andrew de Graeff. They came to seal an alliance which, by uniting their two illustrious families to that of the Prime Minister of Holland, gave them in common the same traditions of honour and devotion to their country. On the side of John de Witt the friends and relations

[1] February 16, 1665. See the interesting pamphlet by M. Veegens on Wendela Bicker.

were still more numerous. His father, his brother and sister-in-law, his two sisters, De Zwyndrecht and Hœufft, with their husbands, his uncle Van Sypesteyn, his cousins Vivien and Focanus, all came in response to the invitations they had received. They were accompanied by the members of the Council of Dordrecht and a few particular friends, such as the advocate Van den Andel, with whom John de Witt had pursued his legal studies, and Jerome van Beverningh, who, of the same age and opinions, was a friend and companion in arms in public life.

All the guests assembled at a mirthful banquet. Songs and recitations succeeded it. The great poet Vondel addressed the young couple in one of his finest odes,[1] in which, following the mythological fancies of the time, he celebrated the happy meeting of the goddess of Liberty with the goddess of Love to take under their protection the welfare of John de Witt and his wife. In it he rendered eloquent homage to the public virtues of the young minister. 'De Witt,' he writes, 'in the prime of his manhood, stands at the helm, and lets no storm tear it from his hands. No favours discompose him, as no hatred alarms him. His prudence restores swords to their scabbards, and he promotes that much-desired peace with England which exempts the citizens from heavy taxes, and leaves the peasants free to cultivate their fields where gold and silver are springing up.' He congratulates him on his alliance with the illustrious family whose renown is added to his own, and engages him to taste the joys of the new life opening before him. 'The work of the State,' says the goddess of Liberty, 'requires a support, a gentle solace. When my faithful guardian is seated in the midst of papers which surround him as a rampart, when he argues in the Council and is daily assailed by the cares of government, his wife alone can give him rest and comfort by her gracious welcome. Advance, then, goddess of Love, and place in the hearts of this young couple your chaste fervour, that this timid girl, united to him who loves her, may henceforth set at nought the crosses of

[1] *Vie et Mort de C. et J. de Witt*, by Van den Hoeven, p. 71. Amsterdam, 1705.

life, and receive with joy into her arms the young hero who has pledged her his faith.'

The congratulations of the first personages of the States completed the eulogies of the poets. Major-General Bréderode, the young Prince of Orange's uncle, writes to John de Witt: 'It was with much satisfaction that I heard of the resolution you have made to change your condition, and to ally yourself with a family so eminent in your country. I pray God that this marriage may succeed to His glory and your contentment, so that you may see continued in your race those great gifts which have been given to you for the service of the republic of the United Provinces.'

Nieupoort, the ambassador to the States-General in England, hastened to address him with good wishes in these terms: 'Feeling sure that you have relished the flavour of the fruit so long desired, I wish you under the circumstances the happiness which M. Cats wished to me with a solemn countenance at the college of the deputy councillors after my marriage—that is, "that you may live long enough to wear one another to rags."'

He adds to this rather vulgar compliment an invitation from Cromwell, who had expressed his desire to receive the young couple in London.

De Witt declined this invitation, not wishing to leave the Hague.

During the three weeks which followed his marriage he had remained at Amsterdam with his wife's family, to keep out of the way of business, and to give himself up entirely to the first effusion of conjugal affection. 'This loving occupation,' as Nieupoort calls it, interrupted the usual regularity of his despatches. He writes to Boreel, the ambassador to France: 'My long absence here and my domestic happiness have caused me to discontinue our correspondence. I hope you will forget my negligence, which I will endeavour to make up for.'

When he brought back to his hearth her whom he had chosen as the companion of his life, he recognised that he had found in her with that grace which captivates the eyes, the

devotion which wins the heart. Her portrait by Nescher represents her with lovely fine hair falling in fair ringlets on her forehead, grey eyes with a tender light in them, a swan-like neck adorned with a necklace of pearls, a slight and graceful figure, and a look of great refinement. She is dressed in a petticoat of brown material, which just allows a glimpse of a very small foot, and a blue satin bodice edged with white fur. The painter has placed her in an attitude which reveals a submissive character. Her early education had been neglected, like that of the generality of girls at Amsterdam too much taken up with worldly life for serious occupations. Ten years after her marriage she asks John de Witt not to be vexed at her writing or the style of her letters. Nor did she ever attempt to influence her husband; she was too humble and diffident of herself to take any part in public life. She signed herself writing to him 'your unworthy spouse,' and feared her husband's time was too valuable to be spent in reading her simple letters. She apologises for her weaknesses and many failings, that she may not seem too importunate in her wish to keep him beside her.

Full of respect and admiration for his character, doing homage to his superiority, she had no other thought than that of making his home life pleasant and peaceful. She gave herself up to the cares of the household with active superintendence. De Witt calls her in his letters to her 'the dear and worthy commander of my home.' When she went away, at rare intervals, to spend a few days at Amsterdam with her family, she showed herself solicitous for her husband's comfort, desiring him, as he had promised, not to fail 'to breakfast every morning, which is good for your health,' and not forgetting the necessary instructions for the good order of the house.

She timidly attempted a few verses, or rather rhymes, to wish him many happy returns of his birthday—something in these terms: 'I wish you, John de Witt, a year of peace and repose. Such is the desire of your loving wife, united to you by the bonds of matrimony. I wish you a happy year, I who am your second soul, to whom you are the dear half of mine.'

She adds, as if to excuse herself: 'It is all I can do.' There was no need for any eloquent expression of her affection, it was shown on all occasions. According to one of the family traditions, Wendela Bicker was nicknamed 'The Gentle Sheep;' while her sister-in-law, Maria van Berkel, is reported to have worn a man's dress.[1] Living only for her husband, and having no emotions but those of conjugal life, she died without having experienced any of the trials and misfortunes of him to whom her fate was united. She only knew his prosperous days, and brought him nothing but happiness.

This domestic interior, enlivened by social amusement, and cheered by the sweet radiancy of reciprocal love, brings out in its true light the individuality of the public man. Around the prime minister were grouped those who had served him in some measure as civil lieutenants, ready to second all his views and to help him with their counsel in the direction of diplomatic negotiations, as well as in the management of internal politics. There were, amongst others, Kaiser, Nieupoort, Van Beuningen, and Van Beverningh. Kaiser, the pensionary of Horn, who had been despatched by the States to Copenhagen, was one of the most devoted friends of John de Witt's father, and was most faithfully attached to the son.

He had encouraged him to accept the nomination as grand pensionary, without disguising from him its perils, and had such confidence in him that he writes to him: 'I tell this to no one but you, who stand to me instead of all. *Tu mihi unus instar omnium.*'

Nieupoort, though eighteen years older than John de Witt, always showed the greatest deference to the young minister of the States of Holland. He had carried on his literary education in France, and had entered on public life as pensionary of Schiedam. He took an active part in the deliberations of the Great Assembly, and held at the service of his country the knowledge he had acquired of English affairs when he accompanied the ambassador Joachimi to London as his secretary. The feelings which he professed for the new

[1] Lotsij, *Cinq lettres du grand pensionnaire De Witt* (Dutch Almanack 1850, p. 77).

pensionary of Holland are shown in the following letter, which he writes to him on the subject of his nomination. 'It is good,' he says, 'to be able to apply to the navigator who stands before the compass for directions for those at a distance, that they may be enabled to follow him, especially in bad weather and with contrary winds.' Van Beuningen, the companion in years and in studies of John de Witt, long one of his most useful allies, and afterwards his rival, was born at Amsterdam in 1622. He was the son of the burgomaster of that town. Left an orphan at an early age, he had successfully pursued his studies at Leyden, and had been made a doctor of law. He showed no vocation for public life. It was the entreaties of his grandmother which induced him to accept the offers of the illustrious Grotius, an exile from the United Provinces and ambassador at Sweden for the French Government.

Grotius attached him to his person, and thus enabled him to profit under the best auspices, by his sojourn in France, for the completion of his political education.

Returned to Holland, and elected as secretary to the Council of Amsterdam, he gave himself up to his taste for solitude and his inclination to misanthropy, and retired to his seat near Leyden, depriving himself almost of necessaries.

There he became acquainted with a band of friends, who, under the leadership of the baker Oudaan, father of the poet of that name, professed a belief in the millennium—that is to say, in the earthly resurrection promised to the faithful, in which they were destined to enjoy a thousand years of happiness. He participated in all the exaggerations of their religious zeal. His relations succeeded in detaching him from them, and in awakening his ambition. This was soon satisfied by his nomination to the important office of pensionary of Amsterdam, which he obtained without any competitor disputing it with him.[1]

Volatile and unstable, though not really false or perfidious, impetuous and impatient of contradiction, but redeeming these failings by the most brilliant qualities, he had inexhaustible resources of imagination at his disposal, assisted by

[1] See Roch, *Dictionnaire biographique*. Royal Library at the Hague.

gifts of speech by turns persuasive and seductive. Always prompt of decision, he was never at a loss to overcome difficulties or turn aside obstacles.

It is related that the Grand Pensionary De Witt, in the days of their intimacy, used to amuse himself by putting to him political problems, for the sake of the marvellous cleverness with which he would answer them. He was always ready with the most unexpected and ingenious methods of solving them, and the expedients which he would invent to avoid any failure often seemed to De Witt worthy of remembrance, to be turned to account in case of need.

The services which he could render in negotiations soon opened to him the diplomatic career. Sent in the first place to Stockholm, in the capacity of minister to the States-General, he gave free vent to those patriotic sentiments which he always retained with generous warmth. He watched with anxiety the vicissitudes of the war in which the republic was engaged with England. 'If we do not vie with each other in burning zeal,' he writes to De Witt, 'in ceaseless activity and great readiness, to make the most strenuous efforts ever hitherto demanded by the State, my fears will be more than I can express; and it might be that the disgrace and misfortunes suspended over our heads would go farther even than I dread.' In another letter he laments the indifference and ill-will of certain magistrates, who, in hopes of a speedy peace, put off the armament from motives of economy. 'If we are too keen to keep our property and our wealth when the republic has need of them,' he declares, 'we shall lose all.' 'How I wish you were here,' answers De Witt, 'to work with me, assisting me with your indefatigable zeal to obtain from the members of our Assembly those vigorous resolutions, and that open-handedness of which we have such need.' The confidence they had in one another appears in the following letter, which Van Beuningen wrote to De Witt to congratulate him on being nominated Grand Pensionary. 'I could not have received more welcome news, nor you a higher or more illustrious position, for the display of those gifts of wisdom, bravery, and goodwill, in the service of the State.

Neither could any other have been found upon whose shoulders so heavy and important a burden could have been placed with so much security, so that I have reason for the most hopeful prospects in the direction of the affairs of the State, and for the first time I begin to hope that the course which has appeared so desperate is not irremediable.' These assurances were a guarantee to De Witt of a devotion upon which he could safely rely.

Jerome van Beverningh, born in 1614, and destined, like Van Beuningen, to make himself a name in the service of the republic, was a grandson of John van Beverningh, who had been lieutenant-general of the army of the United Provinces during the war against Spain. His father, Melchior van Beverningh, who had served under Frederick Henry, had but a meagre fortune; but if he left little property to his son, he spared no sacrifice to give him the benefit of a thorough education. He also tried to encourage in him a taste for work, reproaching him 'for being too fond of walking, swimming, and amusing himself,' and blaming him 'for being too timid,' making great efforts that the young student might do honour to his family and his country.

After having completed his studies at Leyden, and married a young Flemish girl, Jeanne le Gillon, Jerome van Beverningh entered the Council of Gouda, and a few years later, at the age of six-and-twenty, he was chosen to represent the regency of that town in the Assembly of the States of Holland. He took an active part in the debates which culminated in the coup d'état of William II., spoke with warmth and firmness against the undertakings of the Stadtholder, and became one of the principal members of the Grand Assembly charged with the founding of the republican government. He made himself so marked by his powers of work and his eloquence, that Van Beuningen already counted him amongst the men of most value to the State who best merited the attachment and esteem of the country. When the Grand Assembly dissolved, the States of Holland sent him to sit in the States-General, which hastened on their side to recognise his services by confiding to him the important office of Treasurer-General

to the United Provinces. Called to take a great part in the most important negotiations, and fortunate enough to have been always successful, he showed, in the judgment of a contemporary, 'an uprightness and integrity which made him incapable of crooked dealing in anything that he deemed advantageous to his country.' No one was better disposed to share with De Witt the heavy task of government. On learning of his nomination as Grand Pensionary, he wrote to him: 'I confess, without compliment, that I rest my chief hopes on your great qualities, your courage, and your diligent care.'

Beverningh was fond of literature and science, which were his relaxations after public business. He had, besides, a taste for flowers, which he cultivated at Lokhorst, his country house, near Leyden. Later, in his retirement, he gave himself up to the study of botany.

His last office was that of curator to the University of Leyden, whose library he enriched by his gifts. He never departed from the most simple habits, carrying them even to affectation. He was not much to look at. It was only by the expression of his countenance that the superiority of the man could be recognised. He had a broad forehead, a long and slightly hooked nose, his eyes were bright and penetrating, his lips parted by a slight and melancholy smile. He had had his portrait painted in a cloak and black dress, with his hand on a table from which hung seven great seals of office, indicating the powers that had been so often intrusted to him. Underneath is an oyster, showing between its rugged shells a fine pearl, with these words of modest pride, 'Ne me quæsiveris extra.'

John de Witt had need of such useful allies in politics to overcome the obstacles which he encountered in the exercise of his functions. In fact, the prerogatives of his office made him master neither of the government of the Confederation nor even of the government of his province; and it was less by the authority which belonged to him than by his able use of power that he acquired and kept the direction of public affairs.

Nominated for five years only, but always re-eligible, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who originally bore the title of Advocate-General, had been at first charged with the judicial affairs of the province.[1] His powers had been successively extended, and he became at the same time president and minister of the States. He sat in their Assembly amongst the nobles of whom he was the titled pensionary, having power to speak in their name, with right of priority. The ordering of the debates lay with him. Obliged to be present at each sitting, from nine to twelve in the morning and from three to six in the afternoon, the order of the day had to be followed as he fixed it. He communicated to the Assembly the motions of the members, called to order those who wandered from the point, and could always address the meeting either to plead the authority of a precedent or to bring the debate to a conclusion, though without a vote. He collected the votes and announced the result, embodied in a resolution which he read out the next day, or in case of necessity the same day, so that the Assembly might give it the force of law. On occasions when the majority of votes was insufficient, or where unanimity was required, he had the right of postponing the vote, and taking any measures that might secure agreement. He was thus the guardian of the law and the arbitrator of public peace. All matters concerning the administration of the interior of the province came under his jurisdiction. He watched over the observance of the laws and regulations, and took note of all demands made to the States, receiving all letters addressed to them, which he was bound to communicate. Having no concern with the finances, and unable in any way to deal with the funds,[2] he nevertheless had charge of the fiscal measures required for the interests of the public. He had also to render an account each session of the resources of the treasury. In the interval between the sessions he was associated with the councillor deputies, towards whom

[1] See *De Munere consiliarii pensionarii Hollandiæ*, by Van Teta. Leyden, 1836.

[2] Oudaan, *Réponse justificative à Lambert Van den Bosch en faveur de Jean de Witt.* Duncaniana, 1672.

he filled the same functions as those with which he was invested in the Assembly of the States of the Province, and he carried on under their control the government of Holland.

As to the powers which he exercised in the States-General, they were shared with the secretary commissioned to assist him, especially the diplomatic correspondence, and were, moreover, subordinate to the necessity of an amicable understanding with the deputies of the other provinces. Nevertheless, they sufficed to make the Grand Pensionary of Holland the true head of the government of the Confederation. He sat below the president for the week, and when Holland presided took his place on his right. He formed one in all the committees of the Federal Assembly, and was in all the debates the representative of his province, in whose name he had always a right to be heard.

The direction of foreign politics, which had been placed in his hands, gave him the most extensive powers. The States of Holland, represented at the principal embassies and the greater number of missions by members of their Assembly, had easily caused the authority of their Grand Pensionary to be recognised in the conduct of negotiations. All diplomatic correspondence was to be addressed or communicated to him. In addition, he was in correspondence with the ministers of the foreign courts accredited to the United Provinces. If they were granted audience by the States-General, it was with the Grand Pensionary that they treated. De Witt, almost from his entry into office, was even authorised to transmit to them, if required, such communications as did not appear to him to be opposed to the public interests. His privileges were those of a minister for foreign affairs.

A provincial code specified the prerogatives and obligations of his office. The Grand Pensionary had to take an oath punctually to fulfil them, and was specially bound by one article to which John de Witt firmly adhered, and which enjoined him 'to preserve intact the rights and privileges of Holland, as well as the lawful authority of the States of the Provinces.'

On their side the States granted to John de Witt, on

the very day of his entry into office, an act of indemnity by which they undertook 'to guarantee him against all molestation, and to give him compensation for any damage'—an empty promise, which could not save him from a violent death, in return for a whole lifetime consecrated to the service of his country.

The office confided to him afforded none of those opportunities for ostentation and display which would have satisfied a vulgar ambition. The Grand Pensionary of Holland only received the moderate salary of 3,000 florins, to which, in the fifteenth year of John de Witt's office, the States added on his behalf an annual grant of another 3,000 florins, which was judged insufficient for his successor. He could accept neither pension nor present. No show of splendour gave any outward prestige to his functions. He took his place at all public solemnities after the members of the States of Holland and their councillor deputies, had no public patronage, and could recommend no candidate for nomination.

He was strictly tied down as to residence, and could not absent himself from the Hague even for a night without permission. Lastly, he could count upon few subordinates to assist him in the discharge of his duties; he had under his orders, at the office, only a secretary appointed by himself, but who took the oath to the deputy councillors, a director of the foreign despatches, and four writing clerks.

The Grand Pensionary occupied with them four small rooms in the court of the former Counts of Holland, which was now the Government House. The one which he used as an office, with an ante-room for his secretary, was on the ground floor at the corner of the building; it joined the Hall of the Councillor Deputies, and communicated by an inner staircase with that of the States of the Province. It looked on to the great square, the Buitenhof or outer court, which extends in front of the ancient edifice, and on to the basin or pond which washes its walls. It was occupied until lately by the president of the Court of Audit, and the internal arrangements remained unchanged. The old clock which was then still there may have once regulated the hours of the Grand

Pensionary De Witt. It was to these narrow quarters that the prime minister came each day to direct the government of the republic and to negotiate with Europe.

In taking possession of his office, De Witt accepted in anticipation its severe labours and heavy demands. A statesman in the noblest and fullest acceptation of the term, he had a genius for governing, and could use it with ease. 'He is young with regard to the importance and dignity of his office,' writes a contemporary, 'but he has great merits, which enable him to acquit himself of them.' He was helped by an extraordinary capacity for work, which astonished all those who came in contact with him. 'Being very studious,' writes the French ambassador, 'whereas most of his countrymen are extremely idle, he alone has a perfect knowledge of affairs, as they all pass through his hands.'

In one of the last letters which he wrote he apologises to Beverningh for writing to him so hurriedly, 'not having yet had a single meal, although it is nine o'clock at night.' An ambassador asked him one day how he found time to do so many things, when he spent the afternoon either in resting or paying visits connected with his office. De Witt replied 'that he ate and drank with moderation, put aside all thoughts of business when he went to bed, rose early in the morning, going to work without interruption, never doing more than one thing at a time, and taking for his motto, *Ago quod ago*.[1] Sleep restored to him strength for the occupations of the day. Van Haren, who accompanied him in 1655 on his mission to Texel for the equipment of the fleet, was astonished at his powers of sleep in spite of so many pre-occupations. 'From my youth up,' he says, 'one blessing has never failed me: the moment I put my foot into bed at night, all cares leave me.'

His orderliness in business matters enabled him to get through them very quickly. His principle was to postpone nothing to the next day, and, he said, 'his day was never at an end till all was in order.' That he might never be taken unawares, he always carried about with him two note-books,

[1] Scheltema, *Mélanges historiques et littéraires*, vol. v. pp. 105, 106.

which have been preserved in the Archives, and which served him as political handbooks. One contained the various resolutions of the States of Holland and the States-General, regulating the principal attributions of the public powers; the other gave a table of the financial state of the country, and enabled him to see at a glance what funds were disposable.

He arranged his correspondence in the most methodical manner. All letters which he received, both private and public, and the copies of those which he wrote, or had written for him, were carefully collected each month in bundles. He used French, which was the diplomatic language, in the letters which he wrote to the ministers or ambassadors of foreign courts or to the different members of the House of Orange. Transferred after his death to the Archives, where they form a collection of forty volumes, and published, but only partially, up to the year 1669, John de Witt's correspondence brings to life again after two centuries all his titles to a great political renown.

It equally brings out in honourable relief the principal traits of his character. Setting aside all personal interest, and having only the public good in view, he was indifferent to all feelings of self-esteem, and would have had all his friends equally so.

Nine months after his entry in office, on the occasion of a question of precedence with Beverningh, the States ambassador to England, he wrote to him: 'I must say, that if I were in your position I would give no pretext for saying that I worked, not for the glory of my country, but for my personal reputation, although if it were a question of a matter concerning the interests of the national service, there is nothing that I would not take upon myself.'

Jealous only of the free exercise of his authority, he showed a dignified pride in causing his office to be recognised and respected. Responsible for the conduct of diplomatic negotiations, he desired to have the direction of them, and for the whole duration of his ministry he did not cease to demand that he should be supplied with copies of the despatches addressed to the secretary of the States-General.

These letters also show the scrupulous disinterestedness which regulated his conduct. The slightest suspicion of any failure provoked his youthful susceptibilities. They were shown on the occasion of the appointment of his brother-in-law Hœufft as bailiff of South Holland, when he received the complaints of the Council of Dordrecht. Not content with looking upon this appointment as an infringement of their privileges, they attributed it to personal interest, and attempted to have it superseded. De Witt, who was at that time only pensionary of the town, took offence at the accusation, 'which concerned him in the highest degree,' he writes, 'and seriously displeased him.' 'We consider,' he adds in his own name, as well as in that of the town deputies, 'that not only is our personal dignity assailed, but the good name of the town is also involved, and will lead to a diminution of our credit in the Assembly.' He announces his intention of publicly protesting against an attack which seems to be directed against himself unless it is retracted, and appeals to the evidence which can be brought forward 'in favour of his abnegation, and of his upright and sincere zeal.' An indomitable will, which by a special gift of nature was joined to much pliancy of mind, made the exercise of authority easy to him. 'Immovable as a rock,' so writes an English ambassador, 'he never turned aside from the object he was in pursuit of; no difficulty deterred him.' His power was constancy. His obstinacy was tempered by his careful observance of such connections of business and friendship as were necessary to the execution of his projects. Never falling foul of any opinion for the sake of contradiction, and, according to the testimony of the French ambassador, d'Estrades, so thoroughly master of himself 'that no one had ever seen him angry, as courteous and polite as he was bold and energetic, he was gifted with powers of speech both valuable and brilliant, joining persuasiveness to great clearness. He united to the charm of youth that weight of authority which usually belongs to a riper age, and which he had acquired from his very entry into public life by the integrity of his manners, the strict simplicity of his habits, and his firmness of mind.

To complete our knowledge of him, he must be depicted under the aspect of a young man, as he is represented in a family portrait. His thick black hair floats over his shoulders, surrounding a high and broad forehead. The face is oval; it only became rounded by age. The countenance, as a contemporary remarks, is of a southern type, and seems to bear the Portuguese characteristics. The eyebrows are very marked; the eyes, which are somewhat prominent, have that steady and searching look which is a sign of decision and determination. The cheeks, being somewhat hollow, give greater prominence to the nose, which is strongly arched, long, and with a sharp ridge. The mouth, large and well-shaped, furnished with a thickish moustache, betrays much shrewdness in the set of the lips. The hands have that look of high-breeding so prized in the seventeenth century; and the bearing is in perfect keeping with the pensive and serious cast of the countenance, a dignified and imposing presence without stiffness.

Such at seven-and-twenty was the young man who was to preside over the destinies of a free government, whilst directing the debates of an Assembly whose perfect confidence he enjoyed for nineteen years.

His great power was acknowledged both by the States-General and by the States of Holland, who voluntarily submitted to a superior genius. The son of a burgomaster was to take entire possession of the authority which had belonged to the stadtholders, and the interregnum of twenty years during which John de Witt filled the ministry had enough of glory for the United Provinces to enable them, finding in him a great minister, to dispense with a master.

CHAPTER III.

THE WAR WITH ENGLAND—THE ACT OF EXCLUSION—PEACE AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Rivalry between England and the United Provinces—Demands of England—Navigation Act—Naval Forces in the two countries—Tromp and Blake—Success of the English fleet—Death of Tromp—Obdam succeeds him—Financial and military steps taken by De Witt—Dispersion of the fleet of the States by a storm—Distress of the United Provinces—Portugal takes from them Brazil—Their diplomatic isolation—Their negotiations with Europe—Their relations with France—Embassy of Chanut to the Hague—Direction of foreign affairs by De Witt—Internal troubles—Hopes of the Orange party—Resistance of the States of Holland—Popular dissensions—Insurrection of Enckhuyzen—Dangers incurred by De Witt and his father—Efforts of Zealand on behalf of the Prince of Orange—The States of Holland stand on the defensive—The disturbances are appeased—Necessity for peace—Negotiations with England—Embassy despatched to London—Demands of Cromwell—Proposal for the exclusion of the Prince of Orange—Clause of compromise accepted by the States of Holland—Hesitation of the States-General—Imprudences committed in the negotiations with Cromwell—Conditional signature of the treaty of Westminster—Act of Exclusion imposed on the States of Holland—Private correspondence between De Witt and Beverningh—No complicity with Cromwell to be imputed to De Witt—Deliberation of the States of Holland—Vote for the Act of Exclusion—Irritation of the Orange party—Protests of the States-General—*Deduction* of the States of Holland drawn up by their Grand Pensionary—His conduct—His preponderating authority.

John de Witt was taking over the direction of the government under threatening auspices. Scarcely was the new government, of which the Grand Pensionary was to be in some sort the pilot, launched on the wide seas like an ill-fitted vessel, than it was driven amongst the rocks. At the very moment when the interests of the United Provinces were inseparably bound up with the preservation of peace, a foreign war took them by surprise at a time when they were not sufficiently prepared to carry it on, and domestic troubles, on the point of

springing up afresh, added the fears of civil war to danger from without. To these assaults of ill-fortune De Witt was to oppose a resolution and a coolness which left no room for weakness.

The United Provinces had found a formidable enemy in the ally on whom they appeared to have a right to count. After having concluded peace with the Catholic monarchy of Spain, they had entered upon a struggle with the Protestant republic of England, and the two governments, which a community of political and religious interests seemed to draw together, had entered upon a war which disappointed all expectations.

The first communications of the States-General with the sovereign Parliament of Great Britain, far from being favourable to a good understanding, had imperilled it. Of the two envoys sent by the English republic, one had not been granted an audience, the other, Doresläus, a Dutchman by descent, had been assassinated by some English royalists who had taken refuge at the Hague, and who revenged themselves upon him for the judicial murder of Charles I., one of whose judges he had been. Moreover, the last Stadtholder, William II., son-in-law of the unfortunate Charles I., had refused to sanction the recognition of a government which he could not forgive for the death of his father-in-law, and he felt himself encouraged in this refusal by the popular horror which such a crime had aroused. But after the death of William II. the United Provinces were no longer deterred by the same reluctance, and Holland, interested in peace for the sake of her commerce, easily obtained the re-opening of negotiations. A new embassy was sent in great pomp by the English Parliament. The two ambassadors, Lord St. John, lord chief justice, and Sir Walter Strickland, made their entry into the Hague in brilliant array, accompanied by a numerous suite. They were received by the States-General in solemn audience, with the most cordial marks of friendly consideration, and commissioners were immediately appointed to settle any differences which might delay the conclusion of the treaty of alliance.

War was to result from these preparations for peace. Elated by the downfall of royalty, the English Government had yielded to the temptations of an unbounded ambition. The Parliamentary envoys were commissioned to obtain the consent of the States-General to the union of the two nations, under the authority of a great common council, which should sit in England. This was to demand from the United Provinces the sacrifice of their independence, by obliging them to accept the laws of the stronger state. The association of a great, compact, and well-united republic with a confederation of provinces each of which had its own government, could only end in giving England the lion's share, as she had everything to gain, while the United Provinces had everything to lose. The States-General, therefore, rejected with one accord a proposal destined to bring the republic into slavery, or at least into vassalage. The demand which was imperiously made upon them to banish from their territory the sons of Charles I. and their chief partisans found no greater favour with them, and the Parliament began to show irritation at being unable to dictate to them its orders.

The resentment of the Orange party, attached by family interests to the cause of royalty, hastened the rupture of the negotiations. The parliamentary ambassadors, who had not been spared rude treatment during their stay, left the Hague in a haughty and threatening mood. Their departure was followed by two measures, which showed clearly the arrogant and aggressive policy of the English government. The Parliament announced its warlike intentions by the celebrated Act known under the name of the Navigation Act, which prohibited all foreign vessels from importing into England any merchandise except the products of the soil or of the industry of their own country; thereby aiming an irreparable blow at Holland, whose transport trade, valued at 40,000,000*l.*, was her chief source of wealth. The Navigation Act was followed by letters of marque given to English traders, authorising them to indemnify themselves for pretended damage inflicted on them by the navy of the United Provinces. Soon after, the seizure of seventy merchant

vessels, carrying the Dutch flag, showed the States-General that they had no longer any consideration to hope for, in spite of the departure of the plenipotentiaries whom they had accredited to the Parliament.

The accidental though almost inevitable encounter of the two fleets, commanded, one by Admiral Tromp, the other by the English Admiral Blake, who had seized on the pretext of the refusal or delay to salute his flag for commencing the attack, gave the signal for hostilities. Night alone put an end to the first encounter, which had lasted five hours. 'Your Highness,' wrote De Witt to one of the Dutch plenipotentiaries, 'will learn with displeasure that the beginning of a rupture, which it was so much to be desired might be averted by the prudence of one admiral or the other (God knows which was to blame), must now be feared with reason as an imminent misfortune.'

The attempts at negotiation had failed irretrievably. Eighteen months before he was elected Grand Pensionary, John de Witt was appointed to direct them, by acting as pensionary of Dordrecht on the committee of the Dutch deputies, to which they had been more especially confided. He complained of the ill-will and of the bad faith of the English Government, who put obstacles in their way, and, in order to facilitate a reconciliation, he insisted on the necessity of abiding only by the official reports in the States of Holland as well as in the States-General.

The last hopes of peace died away after the useless embassy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, Pauw d'Heemstede. The States, 'knowing what a pledge of moderation he furnished, had sent him to join the other plenipotentiaries in England, in order to show by this selection how much they desired a reconciliation; and to do them a service he had overcome his reluctance to leave his country.' He continued without success for three weeks the most strenuous efforts for an agreement; and, not wishing to give them up, even after his departure from England, he commissioned the resident of the Hanseatic towns, the historian Aitzema, who happened to be in London, to continue the advances which had no longer

any chance of being favourably received. The arrogant obstinacy of Parliament, encouraged by popular irritation, hastened the declaration of war. The two republics, having begun by negotiating a treaty of alliance, entered into a maritime conflict—the United Provinces with sorrow and regret, England with joy and confidence.

The States-General had good reason to dread a naval campaign. All the advantages appeared to be on the side of England. Cromwell had reconstructed the fleet, which the civil war and the retirement of its officers had threatened to disorganise. He could put to sea 106 vessels, which he ultimately increased to 131. The 'Sovereign of the Seas,' later the 'Royal Charles,' which reigned over the ocean for sixty years, carried 112 guns, and was manned by 600 men. Other vessels, armed with sixty or eighty guns, were manned by crews varying from 300 to 500 men. The smallest had not less than from five to eighteen guns. The system of forced enlistment, known under the name of press-gang, gave facilities for the recruiting of an army of sailors, which might amount to from 16,000 to 30,000 men. The administration of the navy was entrusted to the Board of Admiralty, with absolute control over naval affairs. The fleet was placed under the orders of Blake, who, after having distinguished himself in the service of the republican party by raising at his own expense a band of partisans, had rapidly given proof of his high qualities as an admiral. His lieutenants, Monk and Dean, who up to that time had commanded as generals in the Parliamentary army, were assisted by experienced naval officers, among whom were Ascue, William Penn, and John Lawson.

The navy of the States-General was far from being equally flourishing. It had been neglected by the last Stadtholder, who was quite willing to sacrifice the maritime power of the republic to the maintenance of a land force. In spite of the pressing demands of the States of Holland, only fifty vessels were in a condition to put to sea at the beginning of the war. The year following, when, under the vigorous impulse of John de Witt, preparations were actively pushed

forward, the fleet comprised 130 vessels, but it still had only sixty-six line-of-battle ships, and the eighty-three merchantmen which formed a part of it could not hold their own against the English vessels, real floating citadels. Moreover, their equipment left much to be desired, both in the number and calibre of their guns, and in the strength of the crews. The flag-ship had only fifty-four guns and 250 men. The best armed of the thirteen other line-of-battle ships only carried from forty to forty-six guns, and from 130 to 150 men. Thirty-eight others carried only twenty-five guns, and the numbers of their crews did not exceed sixty or eighty. 'I cannot understand,' wrote the minister of the States-General at Stockholm, Van Beuningen, 'how it was possible to be so blind for so long a time as not to perceive the necessity of supplying this deficiency.'

The maritime population, who preferred fishing to fighting, were only enlisted with difficulty, and it was necessary to increase the number of sailors by soldiers ill-exercised in naval pursuits. The States-General had reason also to fear the defection of the Scotch regiments which they had taken into their pay, and whose fidelity it was the interest of the Parliament to corrupt. Finally, the supplies were incomplete, and would not allow the fleet to prolong a naval campaign. The Boards of Admiralty, which sufficed in times of peace for the ordinary expenses of the navy, found themselves unable to meet the cost of the war; and the States of the Provinces, obliged to take upon themselves the extraordinary expenses of the armament, were inclined to leave them to be borne by Holland. The division of power between the Boards of Admiralty, the States of the Provinces, and the States-General was fatal to naval operations, and encouraged the relaxation of military discipline.

The fleet of the United Provinces, which had acquired its fame in the war against Spain, had nothing in its favour but the superiority of its principal leaders, above all that of Tromp, called fifteen years before by the choice of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry to replace the lieutenant-admiral of Holland, Van Dorp. Tromp had distinguished himself on

several occasions by his victories over the Spanish fleet. Endowed with every military virtue, as far-seeing as audacious, he had gained the confidence and the attachment of his officers and men, who called him their father. His name seemed a presage of victory.

Still it did not depend upon one admiral to give an improvised fleet to the United Provinces, and the States-General were fated to perceive that their naval power had lost as much as that of England had gained. Events confirmed their most melancholy previsions. The first battle was lost by Vice-Admiral de With,[1] who behaved valiantly, but was deserted by some of his captains. 'There is wood enough in our country to make gallows,' he told them indignantly, with threats of not leaving their cowardice unpunished. The English fleet remained mistress of the sea. To revenge this defeat Lieutenant-Admiral Tromp, having under his command a picked staff including Vice-Admiral Evertsen and Rear-Admirals Floriszoon and Ruyter, was chosen to command all the naval forces. The republican party, which had dismissed him at the commencement of the campaign, because it mistrusted his attachment to the Orange party, was thus obliged to have recourse to his services to inspire confidence in the sailors. Tromp maintained his previous renown by surprising the enemy's ships near Dover. Having obliged them to put back into the Thames, he sailed victoriously over the British Channel, carrying as an insulting challenge a broom at his masthead.

At the beginning of the following year, 1653, a fresh battle, fought off Portland and continued obstinately for three days, left victory uncertain, but gave none the less a fatal blow to the resources of the United Provinces by the loss of nine line-of-battle ships and eighty merchantmen. The destruction of an English squadron surprised in the Mediterranean by Admiral van Galen proved only a passing advantage for the States-General; a more decisive engagement determined irrevocably the superiority of England. Tromp had advanced to

[1] Vice-Admiral Cornelius Witte de With, born at Brill of a plebeian family, was in no way related to the Grand Pensionary de Witt.

meet the enemy's fleet at the moment when it was enfeebled by the absence of Admiral Blake, whose squadron had just sailed north, and he had hastened to open battle, between Ramsgate and Nieupoort, with the two Admirals Dean and Monk, who had only about an equal number of vessels to oppose to him. At the first attack Dean was struck down by a cannon-shot, but Monk, throwing a cloak over his body, prevented the news from spreading, and the battle continued to rage with unabated fury without any marked result. The following day the two fleets continued the engagement off Dunkerque; the fleet of the States-General was overpowering that of the English, when the unexpected arrival of Blake, who had been hastily recalled, deprived Tromp of all chances of victory. After the most valiant resistance, he was forced to retreat to the shores of Holland, leaving the enemy in possession of several ships and of 1,300 prisoners. He immediately sent pressing demands for reinforcements and supplies to the States-General, and repaired with his principal officers to Flushing, to complain to the commissioners who had been sent there by the Assembly of the Confederation of the insufficiency of the naval forces placed at his disposal. His lieutenant, Ruyter, in spite of his well-known courage, declared that he would not return to sea if the fleet were not to be better armed. Vice-Admiral de With, called upon to give his opinion, set forth the danger with the rude boldness habitual to him. 'The English,' he said, 'are completely masters of us and of the sea.' These alarms were only too well justified; the enemy's ships blockaded the mouths of the Texel, and the fear of a landng kept all the inhabitants of the coast on the alert. But the States-General were not to be discouraged: they caused the damaged vessels to be repaired, and hastened the departure of fresh reinforcements. They then ordered Tromp to proceed to offer battle to the English fleet, in order to force it to leave the Texel, where it had shut up the fleet of Admiral de With. This manœuvre was successful, and enabled the naval forces of the republic to unite again.

After sustaining alone the pursuit of the enemy, Tromp, overtaken by the vessels which he had detached, gave the

signal for a fresh attack off Catwyck, in sight of Scheveningen, under the eyes of the population of the coast, drawn there by the excitement of a spectacle in which the destinies of their country were being decided. Confident of victory, he forced his way through the line of the English ships for the purpose of throwing them into disorder, but his retreat was cut off and he fell, struck by a cannon shot, while pronouncing these words, worthy of his great soul: 'It is all over with me; but do you keep up a good heart.' With him died those sudden inspirations of command which might have ended the struggle in favour of the United Provinces. After three obstinate attacks the two fleets separated, and withdrew, one to the Texel, the other to the Thames. Their losses were about equal; but the death of Tromp, which placed the whole republic in mourning, appeared more fatal than a defeat. 'We have lost,' wrote John de Witt, 'a sea-hero such as the world has seldom produced, and will perhaps seldom produce again.'

A successor had to be found. The States of Holland had the right of presentation to the command of the fleet, which was left to the apparent rather than the real choice of the States-General. They would gladly have appointed Vice-Admiral de With, who had deserved their confidence by his attachment to the new government; but they were aware how unpopular his haughty disposition made him and they shrank from the danger of displeasing the naval forces. Not choosing, however, to put any other superior officer of the fleet above De With, they placed their squadrons under the command of an officer of the army, the colonel of a cavalry regiment, Jacques d'Obdam, lord of Wassenaar, who belonged to the highest nobility of the province and could give them every pledge of political fidelity. John de Witt was sent to him with some of the members of the Assembly, to make known to him his nomination to the rank of lieutenant-admiral of Holland, which paved the way for that of admiral-in-chief. Obdam, 'accustomed to habits of expense far above his means, which induced him to ask for more than was offered him, and gave him in the event of a refusal the ad-

vantage of a grievance,' wished to place a high price on his acceptance. He demanded, besides the promise of a pension for his wife and children in case of his death on service, the right of nomination to the captaincies which might become vacant, and the promise of a speedy increase of pay. These demands prevented the title of admiral-in-chief being given to him, and he never was nominally invested with that office, though he exercised its powers. 'Never having sailed anywhere but on the canals of Holland,' writes a contemporary, 'he was obliged to make up by his good-will and courage for the naval experience in which he was deficient.'

The assistance of the most efficient lieutenants was assured him by the choice of his vice- and rear-admirals. One of the chief commands was given to Rear-Admiral Ruyter, who was appointed vice-admiral by the Admiralty of Amsterdam. Ruyter, who under the rude exterior of a sailor hid the soul of a Cincinnatus, offered a prolonged resistance to his promotion. The Grand Pensionary succeeded, however, by the persuasive force of his advice, in overcoming his scruples, and thus prepared the destiny of the great warrior, who was destined to restore in better times the wavering fortunes of the republic. The staff of the naval army might still therefore, in spite of the death of Tromp, sustain without disadvantage the burden of the war.

De Witt had, moreover, spared no pains in order that the republic should find all the resources necessary for its defence. The struggle with England had lasted fourteen months when he was definitively appointed Grand Pensionary, in the month of July, 1653; but he had taken preliminary steps to place the United Provinces in a position to sustain it, as soon as the provisional exercise of the office was entrusted to him. Wishing for peace, but at the same time determined to make every effort for the continuation of the war, he had begun by giving his attention to the finances, the low condition of which was an obstacle to fresh armaments. The war with Spain, prolonged for the purposes of conquest by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, and which had only been terminated five years before by the peace of Munster, had left to the re-

public a debt of 140,000,000 of florins, bearing interest at 5 per cent., to which was added a sum of 13,000,000 for which repayment might be demanded. Opposed to fresh loans,[1] De Witt sought for supplies in voluntary contributions, in reductions in the public offices, and in the produce of duties on the import and export of merchandise. In order still more effectually to provide for the financial needs, he obtained from the States of Holland not only an increase on the income-tax, but also the levy of a tax on capital. In addition to this he tried to re-establish the directorial authority which was wanting, by obtaining for himself a power of superintendence over the conduct of maritime affairs. To supply the inadequacy of the naval forces the number of war vessels was increased to eighty-six; the Admiralty of Amsterdam bought two large ships constructed for the republic of Genoa; a purchase of vessels was in process of negotiation with Denmark, and the finest of the East India Company's ships were put in requisition. De Witt took with equal care the necessary steps both for the improvement of the artillery and for the enlistment of a larger number of sailors, to whom an increase of pay was promised. To provide against the defection of the Scotch troops in their service, the States of Holland exacted from them fresh oaths, and granted to the officers and men who were not disposed to take part against the Parliament permission to quit their service.

The States-General, on their side, exhorted sailors and soldiers to do their duty, promising assistance and pensions to the wounded and to widows, and offering rewards to any who should distinguish themselves in boarding and capturing the enemy's ships. They did not restrict themselves to these promises: in order to restore discipline, they threatened with death any captain who should refuse to obey the signal to attack. The examples of patriotism which were set rendered their task easier to accomplish. A professor of theology, Robert Junius, asked to be allowed to fulfil his pious office in the fleet. The secretary of Amsterdam, Gerard Hulst, offered

[1] During the first war with England there was only one loan of 800,000 florins, dated June 25, 1654.

his services as volunteer, and equipped at his own expense twenty-four sailors, undertaking to find them in pay and food. The minister of the States-General at Stockholm, Van Beuningen, declared himself ready to endure any sacrifices, whatever taxes and loans might be imposed, and offered to contribute to the amount of 6,000 florins towards the expenses of the war.[1]

A fresh disaster rendered these preparations for defence useless. Before the fleet had taken the offensive again, it was attacked by a fearful tempest, which occasioned irreparable losses and destroyed the hopes of the new campaign. The United Provinces were not in a position to endure the prolongation of a war which caused them an annual outlay of 400,000 florins. The sources of revenue which had hitherto formed the wealth of the State, such as fishing and commerce, were almost exhausted; workshops were being closed, labour was suspended.[2] The Zuyder Zee had become a forest of masts. The country was filled with beggars; the richer families were emigrating to Flanders; grass grew in the streets, and in the town of Amsterdam 1,500 houses might be counted to be let. A contemporary pamphlet repeated in these words the public lamentations: 'Unfortunate Low Countries, whose ports are besieged, whose merchants are perishing; all manufactories are stopped, the fishing-boats are in harbour, even the herrings are not brought in. Confusion, dissatisfaction, and uneasiness increase day by day.' 'You may impose peace on any conditions you like,' was written repeatedly by the secret correspondents maintained by the Protector at the Hague, to Thurloe, Cromwell's chief minister.

While the United Provinces were engaged with England, they were attacked by other enemies, against whom they were unable to defend themselves. Their maritime defeats

[1] He offered these 6,000 florins for the fitting out and maintenance for six months of 150 picked sailors.

[2] A glove maker who engaged forty-eight workpeople had to become a workman himself. A manufacturer of black lace who had employed from 300 to 400 now only employed three.

encouraged the enterprise of a little nation which coveted their colonial spoils. Portugal was preparing to retake from them Brazil, which they had seized from her when she formed a part of the Spanish monarchy. Ill-governed for some years past by the West India Company, the Dutch possessions in Brazil had been forced to defend themselves against an insurrection of the native population, which was secretly fomented by John IV., king of Portugal, in spite of his pacific declarations. His ill faith having been discovered by the seizure of some intercepted letters, which are still preserved in the Archives of the Hague, the republic determined to take summary revenge; but the war with England, which deprived the States-General of the free disposal of their naval forces, assured to John IV. an impunity of which he hastened to take advantage. He fitted out a fleet of sixty ships destined to assist the insurrection.

The negligence of the Company had left the colony no means of resistance; everything was wanting—ships, troops, war materials, and provisions. Admiral de With, who had been sent to the relief of Brazil with a fleet of twelve ships and a landing force of 6,000 men, wrote in justification of his return: 'I would rather, if I had the free exercise of my religion, serve under the Turks than under the Company's directors on the Mount of Hunger.' It was thus he designated the reef of Pernambuco, the last place remaining to the Company. The subsidy furnished by the States-General had long been insufficient, and they could not continue to pay even that. Incapable of saving itself and deprived of succour, the colony was fated to perish, and the Portuguese easily completed its conquest.

Ruined by the war with England, peace was necessary to the republic to enable her to repair the misfortunes of which she was the victim, and peace was delayed by the severity of the conditions under which it must be purchased. To escape from the crisis through which they were passing, the United Provinces would have required the active assistance of some other Power; but no government was disposed to help them, and their isolation added to their distress. They were bearing

the penalty of the arrogant prosperity which had drawn upon them the envy of great and small States, who rejoiced secretly at their present misfortunes and were ready to profit by them. 'Courteous and amenable in times of trouble,' wrote Count William Frederick of Nassau, 'we are stiff and hold aloof when we think we have nothing to fear.' Thus, no sooner had fortune turned against the States-General, than friendships cooled down, and half-extinguished enmities began to flame up again. In diplomacy as well as for the multitude the vanquished are always in the wrong. It sufficed for Cromwell to have been victorious, for other governments, in spite of the revolutionary origin of his power, to have made him the most flattering advances, with a timorous and servile eagerness of which the example was set by the chief monarchies of Europe.

The direction of foreign negotiations imposed henceforth on De Witt a most ungrateful task. He had served his apprenticeship under the ministry of the Grand Pensionary Adrien Pauw, and the whole weight fell on him as soon as he succeeded to the office. Without heeding the disappointments which were in store for him, he set to work with courageous perseverance. His daily letters give proof of his activity and of the knowledge which he had acquired of all the political and commercial interests confided to his care. The republic found in him, from the first, the minister best able to restore to it, by the loyal skill of his diplomacy, the good-will and confidence of the other governments.

The United Provinces were above all interested in engaging Denmark and Sweden on their side. Masters of the Baltic Sea, these two Powers were the arbiters of war by their geographical position as well as by their maritime forces. The amicable relations between Denmark and the United Provinces were aided by the mutual good-will of their envoys. At the Hague, the Danish minister Ulefelt had gained the favour of the Dutch party by his republican opinions, and by the distribution he had made of the order of the Elephant to the principal deputies of the States of Holland, whose vanity he had thus flattered. At Copenhagen, the minister of the

United Provinces, Nanning Keyser, had contrived to gain so much influence that Queen Christina said, with a play upon the words, 'In Denmark, it is no longer a king who reigns, but a *Kaiser* (emperor), who does everything.' After attempting for a long time to remain neuter, the King of Denmark suddenly decided upon a bold stroke. Twenty-two English ships returning from the North, laden with merchandise, had entered the port of Copenhagen to await the escort which was to accompany them back to England. Frederick III. had them seized, and the cargoes sold for his benefit. This act of violence, which was equivalent to a declaration of war, obliged him to unite his interests to those of the States-General. By the terms of the stipulated convention the United Provinces were relieved from the annual sum which they had undertaken to pay to Denmark for the right of passage through the Sound; they supplied her, on the other hand, with subsidies, in return for which Frederick III. undertook to close the Baltic Sea to English vessels, and to provide a fleet for his new allies. But having equipped it at their expense, he took care to keep it for the defence of the shores of his kingdom, threatened with Cromwell's vengeance.

The favourable intentions of the King of Denmark with regard to the United Provinces were, moreover, rendered powerless by the hostility of Sweden, which appeared disposed to form an alliance with England. The throne of Sweden was occupied by a heroine of romance rather than by a queen. Christina, daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, succeeded him at the age of seven years, under the guardianship of Axel Oxenstiern, the chancellor of the kingdom. Arrived at the age at which she could govern by herself, she left the exercise of power to her chief minister, and set all her ambition on dazzling her contemporaries by the adventurous activity of her life, her passion for study, and the brilliant protection which she afforded to the greatest authors of all countries. Endowed, in place of beauty, with the charms of conversation, enjoying the homage paid her by all those whom she attracted around her, Christina divided her time between sport, the perusal of Greek, Latin and French authors, in

giving audiences, and in literary correspondence. Descartes and Huet, whom she received at her court; the Dutchman Hugo Grotius, who, banished from the United Provinces, had adopted Sweden as his second country, and whom she sent as ambassador to Paris; Naudé, who became her librarian; Saumaise, whom she would have liked to keep at Stockholm; Benserade, Scudéri, Chapelain, Scarron, and Pascal, who dedicated to her his calculating machine, were her habitual correspondents, and procured for her the reputation of a crowned Mæcenas. In the midst of this brilliant constellation, she loved to forget her sex and her rank, caring little if she lowered herself as a queen, and liking to appear a free-thinker in politics, as well as in religion and morals. She had received Cromwell's portrait, with some Latin verses by the poet Milton, and had become infatuated with the government and the person of the Protector. 'Your general,' she said, to the English ambassador, Whitelocke, 'is one of the most delightful of men; he has done greater things than any man of his time. I respect and honour him as much as any man living, and I beg you will tell him so from me.'

The States-General had attempted to divert her from this preference for their enemy, and the choice of their minister was calculated with a view to gaining her good graces. They sent to the court of Stockholm their most highly educated and well-read diplomatist, Conrad van Beuningen. The conversation of the young ambassador, which was as serious as it was brilliant, if we may judge by the tone of his diplomatic correspondence, was sure to make him welcome to a queen who had a taste for wit. Van Beuningen, who hoped to succeed in bringing her over to the side of the States-General by flattering her vanity, accepted eagerly her offers of mediation, but he soon perceived that the queen was too deeply engaged with the English Government for her arbitration to be of any value. Ruled by the Spanish minister, Pimentel, the declared enemy of the United Provinces, whom she had made her favourite; mistrusting the negotiations set on foot by the States-General to appease the differences between Sweden and Poland, she appeared only to seek an occasion for a rupture, and openly

pressed the King of Denmark to be false to the engagements he had made with the republic. Van Beuningen succeeded at least in delaying a declaration of war, which would have been a fresh disaster for his country. Christina only signed the treaty of alliance between Sweden and England with Cromwell's ambassador, Whitelocke, on the eve of her own abdication, and at the moment when the United Provinces were about to avert the danger of this coalition by a peace which every day rendered more necessary.

De Witt had continued to send advice to Van Beuningen, recommending him to employ himself in gaining time. Even at the period when he was only assisting the Grand Pensionary Pauw d'Heemstede, he wrote to the ambassador of the States-General at Stockholm: 'With regard to the circumstances in which you find yourself placed at this moment, in my opinion, you should on the one hand not strain the cord so as to break it, and on the other not leave it slack, which would look as if you despaired of success; and I may remark that, to sail between these two rocks without wrecking the ship requires great dexterity and circumspection, in approaching now one, now the other, according to the changes of wind and tide; there never was a more important occasion for the most skilful of pilots to display his art. May God send him a better wind than that which has blown hitherto, so as to bring him into a safe harbour; for I fear that with all his activity and vigilance he may not sail through without great difficulty.'

The States-General, having nothing to expect from Denmark and everything to fear from Sweden, had not been any happier in their relations with the Hanseatic towns, Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, which might have materially assisted them by the number of ships at their disposal. They had negotiated ineffectually with their representative at the Hague, Leo Aitzema, a learned man as well as a diplomatist, who, at a later period, was the first to publish all the official documents relating to the history of the republic. They had no better success with the embassy which they sent to them, and of which Jacob de Witt, father of John de Witt, had the chief direction. The frequent letters which he exchanged with his

son describe the unfavourable reception given to his proposals. Interested in the ruin of the trade of the republic, the Hanseatic towns only sought to take advantage of her misfortunes to deprive her of the navigation of the Baltic. In spite of their declaration of neutrality, England never ceased to obtain from Hamburg all the munitions of war she required.

In the Germanic Confederation the disposition towards the United Provinces was uncertain, and had perhaps not received sufficient consideration. It was in vain that De Witt pressed for the despatch of an ambassador to the Diet. 'When their High Mightinesses employed me in Germany,' wrote Boreel, the minister of the States-General in France, 'I found that country very well disposed. The Germans would agree with us better than anyone, and would keep their word better. They are the nearest neighbours of the republic, and if they entered into a close alliance with her, she would not have to seek for one elsewhere.' But the difficulty of treating with so large a number of princes, often rivals one of another, and the fear of obtaining only at a heavy price useless and perhaps deceptive alliances, had made the United Provinces indifferent to relations with Germany. The disasters of the war which they were carrying on with England no longer permitted them to attempt successfully advances which they had failed to make at a more opportune time. They had kept aloof from the Elector of Brandenburg, who in his position of uncle to the young Prince of Orange incurred the distrust of the heads of the republican government. At Vienna the Emperor Ferdinand III., enfeebled by age, and governed by his favourite minister, Count Auersperg, displayed malevolent rather than favourable dispositions towards them. Moreover, they conceived themselves to be threatened by the army of observation of 4,000 men, which the princes and the towns of the circle of Westphalia were arming on their frontiers. They feared that Cromwell might gain these over by his subsidies as auxiliary troops for England, and dreaded a diversion which would have put it out of their power to defend themselves on land, while the maritime war absorbed all their forces.

The attitude of Spain gave them still greater uneasiness.

Obliged to recognise their independence, Spain could not forgive them for having conquered it. The proximity of her possessions in the Low Countries was the cause of constantly recurring differences between the two States. The establishment of a tribunal of joint authority or mixed court, to which these contests were to be referred, had been a measure of precaution which proved insufficient to settle them. The steps taken by the court of Madrid to obtain the alliance with Cromwell for which it was contending with France added to the precariousness of its pacific relations with the States-General. The ambassador who represented Spain in the United Provinces, Antoine le Brun, was treated with suspicion at the Hague, in spite of the great qualities which caused him to be called by one of his contemporaries 'one of the greatest statesmen in Christendom, and the most capable of comprehending the interests of all the nations of Europe.' Though he was as subtle as he was wise, he had taken a false step which the States of Holland could not forgive him. He had proposed to the Stadtholder William II. to come to his assistance in his coup d'état, and had offered him the forces of the king his master for the reduction of Amsterdam. The Prince of Orange had answered nobly that the King of Spain had no right to interfere in the affairs of the country, and that if he caused his troops to advance, the entire forces of the States would soon be seen united to oppose the foreigners. The ambassador, wishing to repair his first fault, had committed a second in demanding from the States of Holland a solemn audience in order to congratulate them on the agreement that had been concluded. As soon as they knew its object, they begged he would allow them to postpone it to another time; he was therefore obliged to return home, having received something of an affront. Determined to have his revenge, the Spanish ambassador opposed himself to all policy of reconciliation with the republic of the United Provinces.

The only power on which, under other circumstances, the States-General might have usefully relied had gradually withdrawn from their cause. France had ceased to be to them the ally of former times. The peace of Münster, which they

had concluded with Spain, had drawn upon them the resentment of the French Government. Their maritime commerce had been ruined by piracies for which they could obtain no satisfaction, and they were making preparations to take advantage of the troubles of the Fronde to exact reparation, when the disasters of the war with England, taking them by surprise, showed them the necessity for a reconciliation. Their ambassador at Paris received orders to negotiate a treaty which should assure them the support of which they stood in need.

They had been represented at the French court, since the year 1650, by William Boreel, baron of Vrendijke, who had begun life as advocate of the East India Company, and had become pensionary of Amsterdam. He had rendered the republic many diplomatic services at the northern courts, and subsequently in England, where he had been commissioned to offer his mediation between Charles I. and the Parliament. Having remained faithful to the House of Orange, in whose service his son was employed, he did not possess the confidence of the States of Holland, although he tried to deserve it by the regularity of his correspondence. He allowed himself to be easily persuaded by the hopes held out to him of a renewal of the alliance, and showed himself quite confident of the success of his negotiations. Attached to the traditional policy of alliance between the two countries, he professed the most royalist opinions in favour of the kingly descendants of Henry IV. Twelve years later, while still fulfilling the functions of ambassador to France, which he continued till his death, he reminded one of the ministers of Louis XIV., on the occasion of the birth of the Duke of Anjou, 'that in his early youth, in 1603, the valiant and benignant hand of the great King Henry had been laid on his head, and he had then received the royal benediction, which had attached him for ever to that king's posterity.'

The favourable dispositions of the French Government, on which Boreel thought he could rely, were more apparent than real. Deterred by the victory of the Parliament and the triumph of Cromwell from any idea of assistance to the royal cause, Mazarin henceforth turned his ambition towards

obtaining the good graces of the Protector, which he was anxious at any price to divert from Spain. But at the same time he did not wish to offend the States-General. He feared that, once abandoned by France, the United Provinces might make peace with England, and consent, in despair, to a union of the two republics, the proud dream of Cromwell. He was interested, therefore, in giving them sufficient encouragement to induce them to continue a war which served all his purposes by weakening, to the advantage of France, the two great maritime powers of Europe.

Having put down the Fronde and returned to Paris, he drew up the programme of this twofold policy. The French resident, Brasset, enfeebled by age, and suspected by the republican party on account of his attachment to the House of Orange, did not appear to him capable of being usefully employed in these diplomatic manœuvres. Instead of showing any willingness to reward the long and faithful services 'in which Brasset had grown grey, and almost blinded himself by continual labour for forty years,' Mazarin resolved to supersede him. To gain the confidence of the States-General, he made choice of an ambassador extraordinary, Pierre Chanut, who, having been treasurer of France at Riom, had entered upon a diplomatic career, and had already distinguished himself by his embassy to Sweden. His manuscript correspondence, of which the literary merit does him honour, reveals the qualities of the negotiator, as well as those of the moralist and the Christian philosopher. According to the curious narrative of a journey made about that time, 'he possessed all that was necessary to please in a republic, uniting to the rarest gifts of a mind at once acute and lofty, disdain of all pomp and vanity, and studying to live as a Stoic.'

Faithful to his instructions, Chanut made well-calculated advances to the States-General. He began by offering his hand to their deputies on his first day of audience, thus conceding a point of etiquette which his predecessor, President de Bellièvre, had refused to them the year before. He then 'exaggerated,' according to the very words of the despatches which he had received, 'the displeasure which the war with

England caused to the court of France,' wishing to prevent her from being suspected of encouraging the continuance of hostilities, but sufficiently circumspect to avoid at the same time any declaration which might give umbrage to Cromwell. He undertook, moreover, to reassure the chiefs of the republican government, who were uneasy at the preference hitherto shown by France to the Orange party, and he had the skill to establish close relations with De Witt, as well as with the principal members of the States of Holland.

Still, the latter were not disposed to be the dupes of his friendly overtures, and, having little hope of securing the doubtful support of the French Government, except by yielding to all its demands, they delayed, without interrupting, the course of negotiations. De Witt had early divined the aim of the French policy, which was to make use of the republic instead of helping it. Before he was appointed Grand Pensionary, he had already discovered the persevering projects of the French court which did not despair of bringing about the rupture of the peace of Münster, concluded by the United Provinces with Spain. With this object, France offered them the fortresses of Gravelines and Dunkirk, closely invested by the Spaniards, wishing thus to engage the republic in a conflict which would set her at issue again with her old enemies; but she had not as yet succeeded in gaining acceptance for her proposals. Mazarin renewed them with still greater persistence, and attempted to force on the States-General, as the price of the intervention of France against England, a declaration of war with Spain which would enable France, wholly or in part, to conquer the Low Countries. De Witt was too much impressed with the dangers of such a proximity to engage in an enterprise which would infallibly be fatal to the independence of the republic. Firmly decided to pursue towards France a line of conduct from which he never deviated, he did not choose, in order to ameliorate the present situation of the United Provinces, to sacrifice, to the detriment of their security, their guarantees for the future. Whatever might be the advantages of the French alliance, he preferred not to treat at all rather than to treat on conditions of which

he could not hide from himself the danger. Having determined henceforth to evade an agreement with France, he only continued negotiations in the hope of reaping some advantage, for the purpose of escaping from the difficulties of the war with England.

The United Provinces found themselves reduced, therefore, to counting only on themselves for the prolongation of an unequal struggle. Moreover, domestic troubles forced upon them the speedy conclusion of peace. Renewed party discords had finally weakened the republic, and were exposing it to the attacks of its enemies. Van Beuningen wrote from Stockholm to De Witt in 1652, before the latter was appointed Grand Pensionary: 'The State, in consequence of its stormy and turbulent deliberations on the stadtholdership, is in danger of falling into contempt abroad.' 'The bad effects of the prolongation of disputes about the government of the country,' he added in another letter, 'extend even to the court of Sweden, and cause us to be censured, and may, perhaps, encourage dangerous projects.' Ten months later, Beverningh confirmed this testimony. 'So much weight is laid in England,' he wrote from London, 'on the insubordination and disorder in our State, that our enemies think themselves amply assured that, with the addition of the troubles from without caused by their troops, we shall be reduced to subscribing to any sort of condition. As long as the now vacant stadtholdership had not been definitely replaced by the rule of Holland, a cornerstone was wanting to the structure of the republic.' 'This point of union, which we possessed by means of a head which at least guided if it did not command us, having been taken from us,' says a contemporary writer, 'it is to be feared that we may quarrel amongst ourselves, each town thinking only of its own interest, each province seeking only its own advantage, and each individual working only to aggrandise his family at the expense of the public.'

The system of government established by the General Assembly of the Provinces, which was contrary to the ancient traditions of the republic, did not appear to possess sufficient stability to resist the shock of a disastrous war. The House

of Orange found, in the trials through which the new government was passing, a return of influence and popularity, which seemed to threaten the dominant party with a sudden change of fortune. The loyalty of the people was being re-awakened. They were still filled with the recollection of the services they owed to the Princes of Orange, who had rescued them from the yoke of Spain, and they had been accustomed for so many years to live under their government, that they looked upon those of them who remained as entitled to exercise their authority. Thus, although the States of Holland would have wished them to fear the present prince as the son of the last Prince William, they only saw in him the heir of William, of Maurice, and of Frederick Henry; and his youth, which the States put forward as an obstacle to his elevation, only gave them a warmer feeling towards him. The Calvinist clergy studiously encouraged these inclinations. The Protestant ministers, displeased at having been unable to induce the General Assembly to share their furor of religious intolerance, had besides remained attached to the interests of the House of Orange, from a recollection of the services it had rendered to the reformed religion. They appealed incessantly to these services in reproach for the ingratitude of the republican party, and took upon themselves to offer public prayers for the young prince as heir to the offices of his father, without any regard for the sovereign power which belonged to the deputies of the province.

The States of Holland did not allow themselves to be intimidated by these evidences of regret and discontent. Determined to have themselves recognised as the legitimate successors of the Princes of Orange, they were anxious to suppress the honours that had been paid to former stadtholders. They demanded that an order to replace the prince's flag by that of the States-General should be addressed by the Boards of Admiralty to the commanders of the fleet, but did not succeed in having this resolution put to the vote in the Federal Assembly. They did not venture to proceed with it, from the fear of displeasing the sailors, who had just mutinied at Amsterdam with the object of claiming full payment of

their arrears, but they indemnified themselves by altering the city standards, on which the arms of the House of Orange had hitherto been preserved. They secured themselves also against abuses of the press and of speech, which might have endangered their power. By a resolution proposed by John de Witt, and written by his hand on the register of the States, they threatened with the severest penalties all authors and printers of seditious pamphlets and other publications. To prevent preachers also from making their ministry an instrument of disorder, they prohibited them from making any allusion to public affairs. One of them, Jacob Stormont, was even temporarily excluded from the pulpit, because, secretly encouraged by the partisans of the House of Orange, he had given free vent to invective and denounced the States of Holland as usurpers whom God would judge. As the pastor Hultius, one of those who by a rare exception appeared contented, wrote to John de Witt, 'the preachers must rest satisfied with their vocation, which is to study and to preach the word of God, and to assist the poor and afflicted as well as the sick.'

The grievous disappointments of the war with England rendered these precautions insufficient, by giving an irresistible impetus to popular discontent. The spectacle of the fleets of the republic, formerly victorious in Spain, and now vanquished by England, seemed a chastisement of the republican party, punished thus for having seized the power from the hands of the last heir of the Princes of Orange. The re-establishment of the chief authority, civil and military, in favour of the son of William II. was henceforth demanded as the sure pledge of better fortune. Pamphlets, profusely distributed, recalled to mind the example of France, which in the fifteenth century had driven out the English by the aid of a young girl. The partisans of the House of Orange invoked the remembrance of Joan of Arc, in order to obtain the same confidence for an infant in the cradle, whose ancestors were the founders and protectors of the independence of the country. A letter written to John de Witt by his uncle, Van Sypesteyn, is one long cry of distress, and shows with the impressiveness of an impartial witness the irresistible current of public opinion.

'I cannot conceal from you,' he writes, with a wealth of literary quotations which does not exclude sincere emotion, 'what I hear every day with great regret. There is a general expression and feeling that the country is betrayed, as if the prisoners of Loevenstein had given it up. It appears to me, having leisure to inquire closely into the feelings of the people, that the old spirit of disturbance or the ghost of the late prince has been sent once again on earth to set the whole country at war. This calamity is probably brought upon us by those who ought to sound the trumpet of peace and obedience amongst the people. What reason can this body of disloyal pastors have for acting thus? They dare to say publicly in their pulpits that the States order affairs for the worst, that their Noble Mightinesses desire nothing so much as that the navy of the State should be destroyed in order to bring about an agreement with England, and, what is still worse, that they know well that there will be an insurrection, of which they understand the object, and other things of the same nature. I do not think their Noble Mightinesses know all that is whispered amongst the people, and I fear that the conflagration may be lighted up before it is expected: *Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.* Some are for the prince, some for the State; but the prince's party is now the stronger. What will become of us when the flame which is now smouldering shall have risen above the houses? For myself, I am not uneasy. *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ.* But I have defenceless children, and friends who are dearer to me than myself, and *quorum pars magna fuisti*, since there has been placed on your young shoulders too heavy a burden, beneath which old Atlas himself would bow his head.' These fears were not exaggerated. De Witt himself shared them when he wrote to Beverningh: 'Attempts are being made to fish in troubled waters and to give the people the impression that they can do without a master. This opinion is so generally received that there is hardly one inhabitant in a thousand who does not share it.'

Scenes of disorder, occurring on all sides, soon gave the signal, which seemed expected, for the overthrow of the govern-

ment of the States. At the Hague, bands of citizens who had met together on the occasion of the town fair, heated by the wine that they had drunk before the house of Count William of Nassau, fired on the standards, to protest against the removal of the arms of the House of Orange which had been taken away from them, and paraded with cries of 'Long live Orange! Long live Nassau!' It was in vain that cavalry were sent to pacify the tumult: they were forced to take part in the demonstration, and Major-General Brederode, who commanded them, could not himself avoid joining in it. To satisfy the rioters, the ancient standard had to be restored to the detachment which mounted guard at night at the town hall, and the States only prevented further troubles by sending for reinforcements of troops to the Hague. At Dordrecht and Delft also the Orange party gave free course to their demonstrations. 'At Rotterdam,' writes Cornelius de Witt to his brother, 'the magistrates cannot prevent the levies for the fleet being made in the prince's name.' At Haardigen the sailors, before enlisting, demanded that this concession should be made to them, and the States of Holland commissioned their councillor deputies to take the necessary steps to prevent it. In the whole of North Holland the partisans of the House of Orange gave public utterance to their hopes. Count William of Nassau, who had arrived in the island of Texel with some troops from Friesland to reassure the inhabitants threatened by a landing of the English, was received in triumph as a liberator by a population against which the States no longer dared to act.

At Enckhuyzen the ringleaders were quite reckless, and took a skilful advantage of the poverty to which the war with England was reducing the inhabitants. After provoking the populace to pillage the house of one of the burgomasters, they incited them to revolt, put them in possession of the arsenal, and forced them to depose the magistrates of the town. The regiments sent in haste by the States of Holland found the gates closed and cannon levelled on the ramparts, and the squadron that had conveyed them was obliged to retreat to the Texel, leaving the insurgents masters of the town. The

commissioners of the States were no better received. They were empowered to arrest the chief culprits, to send them prisoners to the Hague, and to impose submission. The withdrawal of the troops did not allow them to fulfil their mission. In spite of the dangers which threatened them, they approached the town without allowing themselves to be intimidated by the clamours of the rioters, who shouted to them from the ramparts: 'You shall not enter! Speak, speak!' They demanded that the gates should be opened to them, declaring that they had orders to speak to the magistrates. 'We are the magistrates,' answered the crowd; 'we are the burgomasters; we do not choose you to enter.'

Having vainly parleyed till the evening, they were obliged to depart. On the road they were overtaken by delegates from the town council, who held out to them hopes of an agreement with which they were obliged to be satisfied. The success of this insurrection was an example which might become contagious.

It was against John de Witt and his family that popular passions were let loose with the greatest animosity. The office of Grand Pensionary, which he had filled provisionally for some months, and in which he had distinguished himself by his energy, led him to be considered by the Orange party as the public enemy who must be got rid of in order to bring about the overthrow of the government of the States, which found in him its most valiant defender. His father, Jacob de Witt, who sat in the Assembly of Holland as burgomaster of Dordrecht, nearly fell victim to an assassin. As he was returning to his house, accompanied by Beaumont, the secretary of the States, he was addressed by a passer-by, who exclaimed, thrusting his fist at him: 'I will teach you to speak against the prince.' Some paces further on he was met, and informed that an unknown man had knocked at his door and produced a weapon, saying that he would make use of it that very evening. He nearly succeeded in carrying out his sinister project close to Jacob de Witt's house, where he was lying in wait for him. The States, informed of this attempt at murder, commissioned the Court of Justice to

institute criminal proceedings. At Rotterdam Cornelius de Witt did not venture to go out at night without an escort of his servants. Six weeks later, John de Witt, to whom the functions of Grand Pensionary had been definitively committed, was in his turn exposed to the resentment of a misguided multitude which threatened the States of Holland with a revolution.

Disturbances, encouraged by the growing audacity of the Orange party, had been recommenced at the Hague by a tumultuous mob of children, who, to celebrate the return of the young Prince of Orange, amused themselves by marching in procession with flags and paper scarves bearing his colours. Having caught sight of him at his windows in the arms of one of his nurses, they blew their trumpets in his honour and saluted him with acclamations. The States, fearing that this demonstration might be the signal for an insurrection, issued orders for its cessation; but the parents intervened, and when the fiscal or officer of justice, Cornelius Boys, advanced to disperse the mob, a barber drove him back with the most insulting language. The crowd pressed forward, but was driven back by the cavalry called together in haste, who threatened to resort to arms to force them to disperse; but under cover of the night the rioters returned to the charge. They divided into two bodies, one of which proceeded to wreck the windows of the house occupied by the fiscal, while the other indulged in the same excesses at the residence of the deputies of Dordrecht and Amsterdam, whom the Orange party considered as the principal chiefs of the republican party. The house of the Grand Pensionary narrowly escaped pillage. 'Where is that scoundrel, that traitor, that enemy of the prince?' was shouted at his door by the more furious, thus giving him at the very opening of his public career a foretaste of the popular hatred. The States, to protect themselves against this violence, sent for fresh reinforcements into the town. But they no longer felt themselves safe there, and, fearing the contagion of revolt, they were beginning to make preparations for abandoning the Hague, in order to sit at Delft, a fortified town where their Assembly could more

easily be defended against an insurrection. It would have been all over with the new government if the boldness of the attack had caused the energy of the resistance to waver.

The revolt of Zealand rendered the danger still more threatening. The Orange party had regained possession of that province, and given the signal for a change of government in the town of Ter-Goes. The standard of Orange, floating on the tower of Middleburg, seemed to enjoin the States to give way to the popular wish. They submitted with a good grace, and commissioned their deputies to the Federal Assembly to demand the nomination of the young Prince of Orange as captain and admiral-general, in conformity with the resolution which they had themselves taken the previous year, but which they had hitherto left in abeyance. The deputies of Friesland and Groningen received this proposal favourably. The offers of intervention of the Princess Dowager did not suffice to reassure De Witt, who regarded them with suspicion. He replied 'that she would do better to testify her good-will by actions rather than by words, by persuading the magistrates of Zealand to support her opinions instead of acting contrary to them.' He appealed with greater confidence to Major-General Brederode, to whom he thus testified his uneasiness: 'Sir, you have doubtless been informed of the communication which the deputies of Zealand have made this day to the States-General, and since you know with what energy it is necessary to meet the bad impression which it has created, I have thought it my duty to address to you this request, in which I beg for your presence here to-morrow evening, in order that by your wise and prudent behaviour an evil may be prevented which later would be irreparable. I venture, therefore, to hope to see you here to-morrow evening, if you love our fatherland and the good cause, which I in no wise doubt.'

Threatened with the intervention of the States-General, while forced to defend themselves against the popular sedition, the States of Holland had, up to this time, not given way to any weakness. But the union of the members of their Assembly began to be shaken. The Council of Haarlem

having been gained over to the cause of the young prince, now pressed them to join it also. This proposal was confided to the charge of Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem, who, after having been imprisoned at Loevenstein by William II., gave thus, by a sudden change of opinions, proof of his devotion to the interests of the House of Orange. This was to require the States of Holland to capitulate.

But scarcely was the breach opened by this attempt at defection than De Witt closed it again. Incapable of discouragement, he entered upon a conference with the pensionary of Haarlem, and succeeded in convincing him of the inopportuneness and danger of his proposal. He persuaded him to offer remonstrances to the town council, which ended by taking them into consideration. An agreement once come to, the States of Holland took advantage of the energy with which they were led to take defensive measures against the other provinces. Fearing still that they might be disposed to renew the coup d'état of William II., they prohibited the town councils from receiving any deputations that might be sent to them, either by the States-General or by the States of the other provinces. At the same time, to justify their policy of resistance, they determined to make known in writing their opinion on the proposal of Zealand. A long report drawn up by their Grand Pensionary set forth the reasons which induced them to oppose any change in the constitution of the republic during the minority of the young Prince of Orange. In order to prevent the restoration of the offices of captain and admiral-general without showing any ill-will towards the son of William II., they put forward his tender age, which prevented his exercising the command on land and sea or taking any part in debate; they even claimed to be serving his cause in not giving him for his lieutenant the Count of Nassau, who might thus have been led on to supplant him. They drew attention also to the fact that since the republic was engaged in a maritime war the functions of captain-general of the army were useless. Finally, to show their distrust of the military power, they pointed out the dangers of too great authority being given to one man, who, being no longer

balanced by any counterpoise, could not fail to overstep the bounds of his duties.

They were not satisfied with discussing, they knew how to act. Their energy soon got the better of the revolt, which was now confined to Enckhuyzen, and was there braving the authority of the new government. De Witt made use of the powers of Grand Pensionary, with which he had just been invested, to press the adoption of conciliatory yet firm measures which might arrest this dangerous attempt at civil war. Obedient to his suggestions, the States of Holland, to bring back minds that had been led astray, and to put an end to all fears of reprisals, passed in favour of Enckhuyzen an act called Act of Non-prejudice, by which they guaranteed to the town the preservation of its rights and privileges. But they determined at the same time to send a garrison there, and despatched secretly some companies destined to force, if necessary, an entry into the town. A cleverly concerted stratagem prevented any resistance; a messenger from the States, introduced into Enckhuyzen, invited the people to the town hall, in order to make known to them the Act of Non-prejudice; the inhabitants collected in crowds, and the gates left undefended were occupied by the troops. The citizens, weary of the insurrection, received them favourably. No vengeance was taken; the more guilty fled or were condemned only to the payment of a fine. The submission of Enckhuyzen prevented the Orange party from taking up arms, and disconcerted the plan of attack of the other provinces, who had flattered themselves with ensuring in this manner the prompt success of a restoration. The States of Holland had recovered that power of resistance which in times of disorder is the safeguard of public authority.

By opposing thus with invincible energy a change of government, De Witt was saving his country from fresh and irreparable disasters, and giving it the chance of a peace without which the United Provinces were doomed to become the vassals of England. Surprised by an enemy who overpowered them by the superiority of his resources and weakened by their political isolation, they were sinking under the weight

of their trials. The continuation of a war whose disasters gave the most formidable encouragement to popular passions was not less fatal to the interests of the governing party than to those of the republic, attacked in its prosperity and threatened in its independence.

The speedy conclusion of a treaty could no longer, therefore, be delayed with impunity. But the bold attempts of the Orange party put obstacles in its way; they hindered Cromwell from an agreement by giving him cause to fear a restoration of the power of the family of Orange, united by close ties of relationship to the descendants of Charles I. 'We think it our duty to tell you frankly,' wrote Beverningh from London to De Witt, in a confidential letter, 'that we should not be admitted to negotiate, nor even to be heard in audience, if any public proposal were made to designate the Prince of Orange to the offices of his ancestors, which would infallibly be known here, and would render all our negotiations fruitless.' By disturbing the revolutionary power of the new ruler of England, the Orange party could not fail to make him intractable; the resistance opposed by the Grand Pensionary of Holland to all attempts for the restoration of the Prince of Orange was henceforth the chief condition of peace.

By turns renewed and broken off, the negotiations had followed their course in spite of the continuation of hostilities, and John de Witt, charged with their direction, did not hide from himself that 'on their issue depended the safety or the ruin of his beloved country.' He refrained, therefore, from any act of imprudence which might have made the two belligerent powers irreconcilable. In order not to abandon this reserve, he constantly refused to come to any agreement with the heir of Charles I., which might oblige the States-General to become parties to a restoration. Wishing to reserve full liberty of treating with Cromwell, he studiously avoided any occasion for taking part against his government. In vain did Charles II. propose to join the Dutch fleet, in order to induce by his presence the defection of the English ships in which many officers attached to the royalist cause were serving; the Grand Pensionary opposed an unvarying

refusal to his courageous offers of assistance. Some months later, the States, fearing that 'his arrival in the provinces might be dangerous,' determined that no foreigner of distinction should enter Holland without their authorisation. 'To bind the interests of the republic with those of the King of England,' they had declared already, 'was to put it out of the power of the United Provinces to make peace without him, and to perpetuate the war with the English, while they could more surely put an end to it either by their victories, or by the exhausting of their finances, or by reasonable proposals of peace.'

It was the more necessary to be on guard against any policy of adventure, because such a policy might strike an irreparable blow at the hopes of peace which had sprung up again. In the beginning of the month of February 1653, the Grand Pensionary Pauw d'Heemstede had been informed by private letters of the more conciliatory dispositions of Cromwell, whose ambitious designs were hindered by the prolongation of the war. This communication was made by Lieutenant-Colonel Dolman, an officer in the service of the United Provinces, who had been sent to England, where he had contrived to form useful connections. The States of Holland were immediately informed of this, and determined that a private letter making known their pacific desire should be addressed by the Grand Pensionary to the master of the ceremonies, Oliver Fleming. Dolman did not think this sufficient, and insisted on the necessity of a declaration being made by the States of Holland, more disposed than those of the other provinces towards the concessions desired by Cromwell.

De Witt took advantage of the powers that had just been conferred on him to support this proposal, and requested the deputies to bind themselves by an oath to keep the deliberations secret. He submitted to them a fresh letter drawn up by Ruyl, the pensionary of Haarlem, two copies of which were to be transmitted to England—one to the Parliament, the other to the Privy Council. They were invited thus to take the initiative, without awaiting the decision of the States-General, on whom the Orange party, interested in

carrying on the war against Cromwell, might have forced a policy contrary to peace.

This was the prelude to a separate negotiation, which De Witt was to resume at a later period. The deputies of Leyden were the only ones who opposed the vote, and demanded the previous consent of the States-General. The States of Holland, to avert a conflict, commissioned the deputies who represented them in the Federal Assembly to give the other provinces all the explanations they might ask for; but they determined, none the less, to take the initiative in diplomatic measures.

They reckoned on success for their justification. But the publicity given to their letter, which was printed in London under the offensive title of 'Respectful Petition of the States of Holland, imploring peace from the British Government,' disappointed their expectations, and the official correction which they insisted on gave them poor satisfaction. To cut short all hopes of conciliation, the Parliament declared in their answer that they persisted in treating only on the conditions proposed before the war, hoping thus to impose on the republic an act of submission to which it could not subscribe. The States of Holland were subjected thus to a humiliating disappointment, which disconcerted their premature attempt at reconciliation. Their precipitation, which had exposed the United Provinces to the arrogance of the English Government, did not fail to bring on them the reproaches of the Assembly of the States-General, and the deputies of Groningen demanded that the negotiations should be disavowed. Moderate counsels were on the point of being cast aside, when De Witt interposed and gained for them a hearing. In spite of the abstention of the deputies of three provinces who wished to refer the matter to their provincial assemblies, he prevailed on the States-General to reply to the Parliament, without weakness but without irritation, declaring themselves willing to appoint ambassadors who should have full power to settle the conditions of a new treaty.

An unexpected event had, moreover, made the States-General more favourable to a policy of conciliation. The

government of England had just been changed by a bold stroke. Cromwell had driven out the Long Parliament, in order to exercise with a high hand an undivided authority. The despotic usurpation of a man of genius became thus the climax of a revolution, begun by resistance to the arbitrary power of royalty. With the new dictator, the States-General might resume the work of pacification, which the Long Parliament had hindered. Thus, in spite of the demands imprudently set up by Zealand, the persevering persistence of John de Witt prevailed, and caused fresh negotiations to be entered into. He made, however, several ineffectual attempts to get them put into the hands of a single envoy, to be designated by the States of Holland. He was obliged to consent to the choice of several plenipotentiaries, two of whom were nominated by Zealand and Friesland, in their position of maritime provinces, and the other two reserved for the selection of Holland.

The States of Holland fixed their choice on one of the deputies of their Assembly of whose political experience they were assured, Nieupoort, pensionary of Schiedam, who was designated as chief of the embassy; with him was associated Beverningh, burgomaster of Gouda, to whom De Witt accorded his entire confidence. The States of Zealand and of Friesland delegated on their side Van de Perre, pensionary of Middleburg, and Jongesthal, a member of the court of justice in Friesland, who was devoted to the interests of the Count of Nassau, stadtholder of that province. They were charged with the duty of watching Nieupoort and Beverningh and controlling their conduct, but they were too wanting in diplomatic penetration to prevent the latter taking the lead in the negotiations, of which John de Witt had the real direction. His intimate connection with Nieupoort, and still more with Beverningh, assured him of the fidelity with which his instructions would be carried out. Distrusting the noisy zeal of Jongesthal, he wrote to them: 'If you remain in England I will send you a cipher. Do not let any of your commissioners see this letter, and do not leave it on your table.'

Before he was enabled to proceed with the work he was

anxious to complete, De Witt was nearly being compelled to give it up altogether. The speedy arrival in London of Beverningh, who was a week in advance of the other ambassadors, was of no avail in inducing Cromwell to change his policy. Beverningh, having been received in solemn audience by the privy council, represented to them in vain the interests of religion, government and commerce, that should have united the two countries. The original demands, to which the republic of the United Provinces had already refused to yield, were rigorously maintained; and when Beverningh had been joined by the other plenipotentiaries, the attempts at conciliation, renewed in numerous conferences, had no better success. Cromwell, not daring to disappoint the people of England of the proud dream of domination entertained by the Long Parliament, allowed the privy council to renew the original condition of a union of the two States in one republic, whose power would ensure the triumph of the cause of Protestantism in England.

Reduced to this extremity, the States-General were not at liberty to retreat from a continuance of the war, whatever its perils might be. The proposal of annexation, which Cromwell's government refused to abandon, was a threat of subjection, which did not permit negotiations to be continued any longer. The pacific policy, which De Witt had never ceased to uphold, was not consistent with a peace which would destroy the independence of the republic. Convinced of their inability to triumph over the haughty demands which were made them, the plenipotentiaries determined to return and give an account of the state of affairs. Two of them quitted England. In accordance with the advice of John de Witt, the two others, Beverningh and Van de Perre, remained in London, in the hope of bringing about a better chance of agreement.

The refusal opposed by the States-General to his inadmissible demands, soon showed Cromwell that he had gone too far. His political genius arrested him on the path he was treading, and the prudence of De Witt, who had opposed the recall of the two envoys left in London, enabled him to

continue the negotiations. He himself pressed for the return of the two other ambassadors, who were detained at the Hague for more than a month by the ill-will of some of the provinces, and as soon as the conferences were resumed he demanded a concession, which he flattered himself he should easily obtain. The proposals which he made to the plenipotentiaries consisted of twenty-seven articles. The union of the two republics was no longer exacted as a condition of the treaty; but other demands took the place of the incorporation of the United Provinces, which Cromwell gave up. The States-General were to recognise the maritime supremacy of England, by submitting to the payment of a right of fishery, and to the limitation of their naval forces in the British seas. Further, by the twelfth article of the treaty, they were bound to consent to another guarantee still more important for Cromwell, by engaging never to grant to the son of William II. the civil or military powers that had belonged to his ancestors. This exclusion, which had been hinted at some months before in the despatches of the French ambassador in London, gave the chief of the English republic a political security almost equivalent to that he would have obtained by annexation, by closing the way to his ancestral offices for the Prince of Orange, who, as a grandson of Charles I., would infallibly have put his power at the service of his family, for the purpose of replacing it on the throne of England.

Cromwell reckoned also on profiting by this clause in the treaty to perpetuate domestic rivalries and render irreconcilable the two parties who were disputing the government of the United Provinces. He persuaded himself, moreover, that the republican party would not hesitate to give him their co-operation, and thus oppose a fresh obstacle to the restoration of the House of Orange. Accustomed to stop at no scruples, he expected to find De Witt and his friends ready to accept with eagerness any sacrifice demanded from their country, provided their own political interests were satisfied. But John de Witt was too sincerely honest to lend himself to such a compromise. In spite of the accusations against his political conduct, which were not spared him, and which history, deceived by appear-

ances, has often repeated, the study of public and private negotiations makes it clear that, far from acting in concert with Cromwell, he offered prolonged resistance to his projects, and, if he ended by yielding, it was from wisdom and resignation, not from premeditated complicity.

Imperious as its attitude still was, the English Government had already drawn back; it no longer demanded from the United Provinces the sacrifice of their nationality. At the same time, while recognising their independence, it was determined to make them recognise its own supremacy, and to condemn them to a sort of political vassalage. The envoys of the States-General, in spite of their desire to hasten peace, could not lend themselves to such concessions. They declared that the United Provinces would not submit to the domination of England, nor to her intervention in their internal government. De Witt shared this opinion without reservation. When he became aware of the fresh demands of Cromwell, he wrote in a confidential letter that he considered the negotiations in a desperate condition. 'What we at any rate gain by them,' he declared, 'is that we now know what we have to expect from England, and can take our measures in consequence.' He announced these forthwith in the Assembly of the States-General, where he made a forcible speech, of which the historian Aitzema gives a summary. 'Holland,' he said, 'was determined to make use of all internal and external means of resistance. The internal means were the equipment of a powerful fleet, for which she would spare no expense. External means must be sought for in alliances with France; with Poland, in order to oppose her to Sweden; and with Denmark, to induce her to unite her fleet to that of the United Provinces.

This appeal to resistance could not leave Cromwell indifferent, and he detained in London the ambassadors, who, despairing of obtaining satisfaction, were inclined to retire. A week had hardly passed before he had got rid of the Barebones Parliament, which he had caused to be elected, and had obtained for himself, under the title of Protector, the investiture of a power little short of monarchical. Freed thus from

the pressure of the republican party, he brought back his foreign policy to more reasonable views. He showed himself ready, if not to abandon, at least to modify his pretensions with regard to the supremacy over the sea which he claimed for England, and concentrated all his demands on the proposal of exclusion, which had become for him a dynastic question.

The negotiations were thus entering on a new phase. The more they brought into play the personal interests of the Protector, the more intractable he was likely to prove. Beverningh perceived at once that if he wished to obtain peace on better conditions, he must seek for a compromise, instead of opposing to every demand of guarantee a prompt refusal which would render a rupture inevitable. He contented himself with representing to Cromwell that the States-General would consider the abandonment of their sovereign rights too humilitating for them to consent to renounce them. The Protector, changing his tactics in order to arrive the more surely at the same end, declared that in default of an undertaking from the States-General, he might content himself with that of the States of Holland, hoping to detach them the more easily from the other provinces, as they had already excluded the young Prince of Orange from the government, by leaving the stadtholdership vacant.

Beverningh having rejected this first overture, Cromwell, without definitively waving his demands, appeared disposed to be satisfied with either a secret undertaking from the States-General or a resolution of the States of Holland, which would confirm the one taken some months previously opposing the re-establishment of the offices of captain- and admiral-general for the benefit of the son of William II. 'This latter expedient,' as Cromwell himself described it, was probably not agreed to, since the day following the interview in which he had suggested it to Beverningh he insisted on his first demand that the exclusion should be pronounced by the States-General.

It was probably in these diplomatic conferences that a new article was proposed, stipulating that every captain- and admiral-general should bind himself by oath to respect the

treaty of peace concluded with the republic of England. This clause, called Clause of Compromise, appeared sufficient to guarantee to the Protector the alliance with the United Provinces, and to make it a law of the State, to which the Prince of Orange must submit, if he were ever appointed to command their army and fleet. Cromwell replied to this offer of a compromise neither by consent nor refusal, 'although it had been communicated to the ambassadors on good authority and by a person of distinction.' His indecision gave an opportunity for the continuance of measures which would speedily have ensured the success of the negotiation, if they had not been interrupted by an act of irreparable imprudence.

The Protector, determined to be revenged on the King of Denmark, who, in confiscating some English ships in his ports, had made a declaration of war, had signified his refusal to allow him to be included in the treaty of peace. The plenipotentiaries of the United Provinces could not, without dishonour, consent to abandon their ally, and tried in vain to induce him to give satisfaction. After fruitless remonstrances, Beverningh and the two other ambassadors, Nieupoort and Jongesthal,[1] resolved on proceeding to ask for instructions from the States-General, and proposed to Cromwell to leave in London one of their number, with whom he might perhaps at length come to an understanding. Cromwell not having replied, they started, intending to embark, but they were soon overtaken by an envoy from the Protector, Dolman, who came to press for their return, begging them not to despair of an agreement. The plenipotentiaries, fearing by too great precipitation to encourage the measures which Cromwell was trying to impose upon them with regard to the Prince of Orange, and hampered by the responsibility of coming to a decision, stood on their guard against these advances, instead of trying to take advantage of them. Beverningh and Nieupoort would willingly have yielded to the request made to them, but their colleague Jongesthal would not hear of it.

[1] The third, Van de Perre, had died. De Veth, deputy of Zealand, was afterwards chosen to succeed him.

He was obeying the suggestions of Bordeaux, the French ambassador in London, who, interested in delaying the conclusion of a treaty by which France did not appear likely to profit, encouraged the distrust of the deputy of Friesland towards his colleagues of the embassy by persuading him that they had, unknown to him, entered into secret negotiations with the Protector against the Prince of Orange. To baffle these manœuvres, Jongesthal threatened to depart alone, and thus obliged them to accompany him. Before leaving the country, the envoys of the United Provinces, hoping to avert Cromwell's displeasure, assured him that they would press the Assembly of the Confederation to give him a prompt answer; but he sent them word, 'that he threw on them the responsibility of the disasters which such a delay might cause, and that he held himself absolved before God and man.' The fault was committed. An inopportune hesitation had caused the favourable opportunity to be lost, and fresh tergiversations which disconcerted the latest efforts of John de Witt were about to render still more onerous the conditions of peace.

Immediately on their arrival at the Hague the plenipotentiaries gave an account of their mission to the Assembly of the States-General. Their report only bore on the clause of compromise; it ignored the overtures made by Cromwell to Beverningh, for obtaining from the States of Holland an undertaking to oppose the restoration of the House of Orange. The States of Holland foreseeing the danger that might arise from this sudden return, and wishing at any rate to avert its fatal consequences, sent pressing demands, in the name of the committee entrusted with diplomatic affairs, that the ambassadors should be sent back to England with orders to sign the treaty as it had been drawn up; but the other provinces had not the good sense to respond to this appeal. They distrusted Nieupoort and Beverningh, suspecting them of having taken the initiative in the secret proposals made to Cromwell. Besides, the majority chose to show their zeal for the Orange cause by rejecting or vehemently debating all the conditions which would place the government of the republic in subjection to the Protector. They caused it to be decided therefore, on

the demand of Guelders, that the articles of the treaty should be submitted for examination to the different provincial States. They thus created difficulties which were destined to bring about the rupture of the negotiations.

De Witt forthwith set to work to preserve his country from the dangers of this short-sighted policy. In accordance with his advice, the States of Holland, after a prolonged discussion, approved by a unanimous vote the draft of the treaty which contained the clause of compromise. In the hope of causing this example to be followed by the other provinces, they immediately informed the States-General of their determination. At the same time they hastened to communicate it to the Protector, to whom they sent back Beverningh, without, however, having obtained for him from the States-General the diplomatic powers indispensable for the fulfilment of his mission.

On his return to London, Beverningh immediately perceived that Cromwell's dispositions were changed. The ambassadors of the United Provinces had already incurred his animosity by hastening their departure when he wished to detain them. When he learnt that Beverningh was returning alone without being accredited by the States-General and without being authorised to recognise him, henceforward, in his quality of Protector, he considered himself offended, and gave free vent to his anger. It was skilfully taken advantage of by the war party, who pressed him to refuse all concessions. Beverningh imparted in a secret despatch to De Witt the anxiety he felt. 'Inclinations are not adverse, at least in appearance, but there has been much annoyance felt with regard to formalities, and I do not know how it is to be obviated. I was asked a thousand questions, why we left without signing, and why I returned alone, without any powers. I was not received by his Highness, and the only answer made me was that I was looked upon only as a private individual, and therefore no communications could be entered into with me. I fear that the article relating to the Prince of Orange is a stumbling-block. To remedy that which I am afraid to mention, I see no other means than to hasten affairs, or in the

event of a delay that I should be furnished with some document which will obtain me a hearing.'

This advice came late as it was, and the States-Genera made it useless by their prolonged disputes. The deliberations referred to the States of the Provinces were interrupted by constantly recurring obstacles. Encouraged by the pressing importunities of the ambassador Chanut, some of the provinces, zealous for a French alliance, insisted that France should be included in the treaty of peace, while Cromwell opposed an obstinate resistance to this demand. De Witt dissuaded the States-General from persisting, representing to them that 'their bark was too small to tow so large a ship;' and the French ambassador, to avoid the humiliation of an apparent refusal, declared haughtily 'that the King his master could quite well do without the services of the United Provinces.'

Other debates equally stormy threw further difficulties in the way of some of the conditions of the treaty and excited the distrust of the Orange party. The article which excluded from the territory of the two republics 'their common enemies' raised suspicions. Guelders, supported by some of the other provinces, demanded that it should be drawn up in such a form that it could never be made use of against the House of Orange. To reassure the Princess Dowager, De Witt represented to her that this interpretation did not enter into the Protector's views, and that, moreover, the States of Holland could never be induced to give their consent to it. The clause of compromise, instead of being looked upon as a concession to be obtained from Cromwell, did not itself escape; the States of Friesland, alleging that it obliged the commanders of the land and sea forces of the United Provinces to swear to observe the treaty of peace, demanded that the Protector of England should be bound by the same oath. The States of Zealand, fearing that any concession made to Cromwell would only provoke fresh exactions on his part, refused to consent to the compromise, unless an agreement was come to to reject any other condition that concerned the Prince of Orange. To overcome their resistance, this clause had to be added to the

treaty under the form of an additional article, so as not to form an integral part of it.

The Protector could not fail to be still further exasperated by the unseasonable delays which had till now prevented his government from being acknowledged. Friesland demanded that no congratulations should be addressed to Cromwell before the return of the two envoys of the States-General, Nieupoort and Jongesthal. Holland obtained with difficulty and after some delay an authorisation for Beverningh to precede the two ambassadors, in order to give the chief of the republic of England the satisfaction which he imperiously demanded. At the same time she urged the States-General to draw up the draft of the treaty in its definitive form, leaving the various provinces free to make their proposals of modifications, provided these modifications, if not accepted by Cromwell, should not be an obstacle in the way of the conclusion of peace. On the day when the votes were to be given, all was once more undecided. Zealand was represented in the Federal Assembly by only one of her deputies. Aylva, the deputy of Friesland, refused to accept the office of president; while of the two deputies of Utrecht one, Renswonde, objected to replace him, and the other, Amerongen, only consented to fill the office of president if the deliberation was dated the following day, on which the weekly turn for the presidency of his province came round. The system of government of the United Provinces, where, as the French ambassador wrote, 'everything, even the most secret negotiations, was done to the sound of the drum,' could not fail to keep Cromwell informed of these manifestations of ill-will, which appeared to him in striking contrast with the obsequious demonstrations of other governments.

The hostility into which the Orange party imprudently allowed itself to be drawn was still more intolerable to him. Already, while in London, Jongesthal had compromised the success of the negotiations by his ill-advised proceedings. 'Our colleague, Jongesthal,' wrote Beverningh to Nieupoort, 'in addition to the harm he has done both to the State and to us, has left a sad reputation behind him. The Protector has

been only too well informed, not only of his disaffection, but also of certain remarks which he has imprudently let fall, and which have been pertinently and fully reported. I have been told, for instance, that he was heard to say: In case of the non-success of the treaty, the State is determined to declare war against the Protector in person, while offering its friendship to the nation, which must have annoyed the Protector; and I am sorry for it with all my heart, since the State has never had any intention of the kind, and it is an absolute invention.'

In the United Provinces, hostility against Cromwell had never ceased to be displayed. At Utrecht, a pamphlet was publicly sold in which the Protector was nicknamed the 'Were-wolf.' To avert his resentment, the Court of Holland condemned to fine and imprisonment the authors of another libel, entitled 'Machinations of the Protector,' and forbade its being printed under pain of death. The Count of Nassau secretly encouraged these manœuvres and attacks. In spite of his apparent, rather than genuine, protestations in favour of peace, he advised resistance to the demands of Cromwell, from a fear that they might render him more insolent if they were submitted to. 'I consider him,' he wrote, 'as a traitor to his country and his king, and as a violator of the laws I maintain that no confidence ought to be placed in him.'

Regarding this as an insult, Cromwell renounced those conciliatory observances to which he had appeared disposed. Up to this time he had been satisfied with the communications made to Beverningh before the abrupt departure of the ambassadors; and if since the return of Beverningh the clause of compromise no longer satisfied him, he had not yet pronounced himself with regard to the new conditions concerning the Prince of Orange. The honours which he caused to be paid to the two ambassadors, Nieupoort and Jongesthal, when the latter returned to England with their new diplomatic powers, appeared even to give ground for hopes of the prompt conclusion of peace. The articles definitively settled upon in the conferences which had just been resumed only awaited

his signature, when suddenly his pretensions were again displayed with the most inflexible obstinacy.

At their very first audience with the English commissioners, the ambassadors of the United Provinces were informed that the treaty would not be signed till it had been revised. At the same time, Thurloe, the secretary of state, requested an interview with Beverningh, and represented to him that, if he wished to induce Cromwell to give up the article which stipulated for the exclusion of the Prince of Orange by the States-General, he must undertake that this guarantee should be given him by the States of Holland. The Protector thus returned to his original intention, and Beverningh, who thought he had obtained a definitive concession, found himself once more face to face with the same demand. He did not, however, weary of resisting it; but in the two fresh interviews which he had with Thurloe he was obliged to recognise the fact that he was henceforth only renewing fruitless efforts. A last attempt to move Cromwell was not more successful. Beverningh and Nieupoort represented to him without avail that they were not authorised to enter into any engagement with him in the name of the States of Holland. They could not avoid, however, transmitting officially to the Grand Pensionary the demand of exclusion, in order that it might be communicated to the deputies of their province, but they concealed this step from their colleague, Jongesthal, who would not have failed to frustrate it. Without as yet renouncing the vain hope of inducing Cromwell to yield, as they explained to De Witt in a private letter, they declared in their despatch, intended to be read to the States of Holland, that the necessity of either giving or refusing to him the concession which he demanded could no longer be evaded.

At this price only, Cromwell consented to sign the articles of the treaty, which the ambassadors would not leave any longer in suspense, from the fear of fresh changes; but he took care to state that he would not execute it unless he obtained the resolution of the States of Holland, 'under a form and within a period which he would consent not to limit too strictly.' It was the only concession which he would make.

While obtaining peace, the States-General were obliged to purchase it under disadvantageous conditions. To enable their ally, the King of Denmark, to participate in it, they guaranteed in his name the important sum of 2,450,000 florins, which was demanded of him as indemnity for the seizure of twenty-one English ships in the port of Copenhagen. No satisfaction was refused to England. They not only conceded to her the salute of her flag in the British seas, but also pecuniary reparation for an old injury of which she had never ceased to complain for more than thirty years, the execution of five British subjects convicted of having attempted to seize the island of Amboyna from the East India Company. Besides this, the States-General undertook to refuse any assistance, and even any shelter, to the enemies of the English Government; and the banishment of the royal family was also guaranteed to the Protector. Finally, to secure Cromwell from an abrupt change in the policy of the United Provinces, they were to cause every commander whom they should select as captain- or admiral-general to swear observance of the treaty.

The only advantage of the treaty for the United Provinces was the cessation of the war; but the prolongation of the war would have rendered the ruin of the republic inevitable. According to the testimony of a contemporary writer, who would not have allowed the opportunity to escape of incriminating the policy of John de Witt, if it had given any opening for his often passionate attacks, 'the treaty of Westminster is the only matter with which the English have to reproach Cromwell in what concerns the glory and interest of their nation. On this occasion he has sacrificed it to his own advantage, since he could, by continuing the war, have made Holland tributary.' Chanut, who, in the interests of France, had shown himself hostile to the negotiations, had ended by himself recognising the necessity of hastening their conclusion. 'The resumption of the war,' he wrote, 'would have given such advantages to England that nothing could have resisted her on the seas. I therefore thought that we ought to hope for peace; the evil is visibly great enough for

a respite to be desired, if we wish for the continued existence of this State.'

The necessity of satisfying Cromwell by conceding to him the Act of Exclusion was henceforth imposed upon the States of Holland. It weighed heavily on De Witt, as head of the government, and as the leader of a party. As head of the government, he must fear compromising Holland, and usurping for the advantage of one small province the diplomatic powers of the States-General. As leader of a party, he must recognise the danger of a compliance which subjected the United Provinces to the exactions of a foreign government, lately their declared enemy, and which would thus arouse the national feeling in favour of the Prince of Orange. The agreement between his public despatches and the private letters which he addressed to Beverningh, and some of which have been recently discovered, proves that he had made no compact with Cromwell, and suffices therefore for his justification.

The Grand Pensionary had been made acquainted, since the month of December, 1653, with the first overtures made by Cromwell to Beverningh and Nieupoort, to obtain from the States of Holland the vote of exclusion of the Prince of Orange. He had rejected them without a second thought. On January 2, 1654, before the ambassadors left London, he wrote to them confidentially: 'The point which concerns the Prince of Orange causes me the greatest anxiety. The promise demanded will doubtless be refused by some of the provinces, and will certainly not be obtained from the majority. Not only will it be out of the question for each province to give it separately, but it will be equally impossible to hope for it from the States-General. I had always reckoned, and had always wished, that the English Government should leave to the States-General and to each of the provinces the most absolute liberty of appointing the prince or not, according to their good pleasure; but admitting, on the other hand, that it should be equally at liberty, in the event of his appointment, to renounce the treaty or to continue to adhere to it.' This was the line of conduct which he proposed to follow, and during

Beverningh's stay at the Hague he had given him no other instructions. The letter in which Beverningh, after his return to London, complains 'of having been treated by Cromwell with want of courtesy and even with rudeness,' is sufficient to dispel any suspicion of connivance. 'I am glad to think,' writes De Witt to him, 'that the clause of compromise may bring about the success of your negotiation with the Protector on this subject, from what I fancy I noticed in your report.'

It was only the fresh communications made by Beverningh, after his return to England, which began to undeceive the Grand Pensionary. 'As regards the affair of the Prince of Orange,' suddenly announced the ambassador of the States, 'I think it will be allowed to drop; but I have no longer any certainty, this point not being included by the secretary of state, Thurloe, in the general declaration made by him as to the immutability of the articles of the treaty.' The imperious demands of Cromwell soon justified these alarms. They soon proved to De Witt the necessity of yielding; and not flattering himself with being able to resist, without hastening the ruin of the country, he prepared to make up his mind to submission, though still hoping to avoid it. The following letter, which he addressed to Beverningh, gives proof both of the last hopes which he retained and of the precautions to which he had recourse, in case no concession could be obtained. 'The English proposal, as it has been put before you,' he wrote, 'does not prevent a hope that the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange may be avoided, and that confidence will be placed in the wisdom and good-will of their Noble Mightinesses, who, once the treaty concluded, will give no ground for fear as to their favourable dispositions. Still, if the hopes of peace should be desperate, in default of the said Act it would be necessary not only to certify this to the States of Holland, but also to renew this assurance at intervals of a few days, even if it should be in a despatch confided to a courier. It is also, in my judgment, very necessary that you should assure them continually, provided this assurance is in conformity with the truth, of the positive determination of the Protector, in order to dispel

the suspicions that ill-disposed deputies might attempt to spread.'

The superiority of John de Witt in political strategy suggested to him promptly the best steps to be taken for the execution of the plan which he had traced out for himself, and of which he foresaw all the difficulties. Without allowing himself to be deluded by the advantage that might be anticipated, and not wishing to be taken by surprise, he employed himself in preventing the Act of Exclusion from being, on the part of the States-General, the signal for the rupture of negotiations. Informed, in the last despatch addressed to him by Beverningh and Nieupoort, dated April 15, 1654, of the now irrevocable determination of the Protector, he delayed the communication which he had to make to the States of Holland, and pressed them to separate in order to take their Easter holiday. As soon as they had prorogued their sitting, he took advantage of the interruption of their meetings to obtain from the States-General the ratification of the treaty, in the form in which Cromwell had now approved of it. These latter having at length voted for it, without referring the matter to the States of the Provinces, he hastened to conclude the secret negotiation which held in suspense the conclusion of peace.

Recalled suddenly to the Hague by the councillor deputies whom De Witt had been obliged to take into his confidence, the members of the States of Holland were immediately required to take an oath of secrecy in the deliberation about to be commenced. This pledge once given, the Grand Pensionary communicated to them the letter of the two ambassadors, which he was commissioned to impart to them. The despatch informed the States of the conferences in which Cromwell had rigorously demanded the Act of Exclusion; it stated the fruitlessness of the efforts which had been made to dissuade him from it, and warned the States that the treaty of peace was dependent upon this condition and upon their consent to it. This unexpected communication was received with melancholy surprise. Complaints were made that the dispositions of Cromwell had not been foreseen or notified sooner.

An adjournment was decided upon in compliance with the demands of several deputies [1] who considered themselves bound to consult their town councils. To avert the dangerous consequences of this delay, which might compromise everything, De Witt contrived that the communication should only be made to the burgomasters of the towns, without being transmitted to the members of council, unless the burgomasters should refuse to pronounce an opinion. He demanded that the oath of secrecy should be imposed upon them, and obtained a decision that the debate should be resumed in the Assembly of the States at the end of three days.

On May 1 it was resumed in two consecutive sittings, with unusual vehemence. The deputy of the nobility who as president of the councillor deputies voted first was Count Brederode, great-uncle of the Prince of Orange. Desirous of retaining the chief command which he exercised in his capacity of major-general, he approved the proposal submitted to the States. His opinion was shared by five members of the nobility; four others, on the contrary, opposed it energetically, and one of them, attacking Vice-Admiral Wassenaar d'Obdam, who voted in conformity with Major-General Brederode, reproached him with 'wishing to be a little Cromwell.' The suffrage of the nobles was given in favour of the Act of Exclusion by a majority of only two votes, but at the second ballot, which took place at the afternoon sitting, the dissentients gave in their adhesion by a unanimous vote.

The deputies of Dordrecht, the principal representatives of the party opposed to the Prince of Orange, showed no hesitation. They considered that the blessings of peace would not be purchased too dearly, if it were necessary to sacrifice to them the cause of an infant prince; they added that this sacrifice would cost the States of Holland but little, as they had, since the death of William II., kept his son aloof from power. They therefore urged the Assembly to accept a condition which the disasters of the war did not allow them to reject without imprudence. The deputies of Amsterdam, strengthened by the unanimous vote of their town council,

[1] The deputies of the nine towns.

supported the deputies of Dordrecht, and their opinion, which represented that of the most important town in the province, was confirmed by the majority of voters, amongst others, those of Gouda and Rotterdam.

Still the defenders of the proposal found some adversaries who were determined to oppose it, notably Ruyl, pensionary of Haarlem, Wevelinckhoven, pensionary of Leyden, and Shagen, pensionary of Alkmar. The deputies of Haarlem gave the signal for resistance 'with persuasive eloquence.'

After accusing the ambassadors of having been guilty of dissimulation, in keeping secret the latest proposals that had been made them, they rejected the Act of Exclusion, as injurious to the liberty of the State and to the House of Orange. Declaring that they preferred to continue the war sooner than submit to this humiliation, they demanded that the Act should be communicated to the States-General. The deputies of Leyden, supported by those of Edam, proved even more intractable; they disputed the power of the Assembly of the Province to come to any decision which should compromise the interests of the entire Confederation, and demanded a preliminary agreement, at least with the States of Zealand. So decided a difference caused a hesitation in the minds of some members, who, before giving their opinion, desired to wait till the minority should give way to the opinion of the majority. The absence of several deputies prevented the closing of the debate, which had been resumed in the afternoon; it was definitively adjourned till the following Monday.

From the very commencement of this fresh sitting, the hopes of conciliation appeared to be frustrated. The absence of Major-General Brederode, kept away by illness, put De Witt in a difficulty. The deputies of Haarlem, Leyden, and Edam, renewed their opposition, in which they were joined by the deputies of Enckhuyzen, who had just arrived. The Act of Exclusion was none the less voted by all the other members of the States, though the representatives of the four opposing towns would not consent to yield. The deputies of Alkmar tried in vain to rally the Assembly to a unanimous vote, by demanding the definitive abolition of the stadtholdership rather than

the exclusion of the House of Orange. Their proposal not being supported, and a second ballot showing the same disagreement, the obstacles put in the way of a definitive vote appeared now insurmountable. The Grand Pensionary now spoke and tried to convince the dissentients by the most overwhelming arguments. He represented to them that by giving their verdict on the condition made by Cromwell to the treaty of peace they would vote for the safety or the loss of the republic. Unable to conquer their resistance, he demanded that a decision should be come to by the majority. The deputies of Haarlem and of Leyden contested the legality of this proposal. They declared that the resolution demanded of the States must be unanimous, because it concerned, at once, the question of peace and of a change of government; but De Witt persuaded the majority to proceed. Anxious to put an end to a debate which had lasted till half-past seven in the evening, he took advantage of this prolongation of the sitting to have conferred on the ambassadors the definitive authorisation for which they were waiting. He succeeded in carrying this, and immediately withdrew, to put in writing the Act of Exclusion. A few minutes later he returned to the hall to read it to the deputies. 'I think I have drawn up the Act,' he said, 'so as to preserve as far as possible the liberty of the State, and, at the same time to fulfil, if it must be, the desire of the Protector.'

The States of Holland, to satisfy Cromwell's demands, agreed to give no power, civil or military, to the Prince of Orange in their province. They promised, moreover, to refuse their consent to his nomination as captain-general of the forces of the republic, if it should be proposed to the States-General. Fourteen members of the States confirmed this resolution by their votes; four rejected it by a protest which they caused to be registered: one abstention, that of the deputies of Alkmar, completed the nineteen votes of which the assembly was composed. The Act of Exclusion was thus adopted by the majority of votes. The sacrifice so long delayed was accomplished.

The measures taken by De Witt narrowly escaped being

defeated by the imprudence of Beverningh in not sending him his secret correspondence by private hand. 'I was much embarrassed,' wrote the Grand Pensionary, 'by the receipt of your two letters, which were handed to me during the sitting, at the very moment when some members were complaining of the conduct of affairs and pretending falsely that information was kept back from the government. The packet was so large that it could not fail to attract attention, and certain members may demand that in future letters should be opened and read at the sitting. You would not see without distress all the private matters which we write of to one another in our intimate friendship read before the whole Assembly. You must therefore address your communications to me away from the Assembly, at my own house, and join to them a short letter which I can show to everybody.'

These precautions were not intended to conceal a double game, nor to abuse the confidence of the States of Holland. De Witt, after obtaining the full powers which authorised him to satisfy Cromwell, did not despair of evading the necessity for making use of them. His latest letters to the ambassadors, public as well as private, entirely exonerate him from any suspicion of servile compliance. The Act of Exclusion, instead of being addressed directly to Cromwell, was only sent to Beverningh and Nieupoort with strict injunctions to keep it privately in their own hands, and not to deliver it, or even to communicate it to the Protector.

The two ambassadors were to represent to Cromwell that Holland had pronounced herself strongly enough against the restoration of the Prince of Orange to render it unnecessary for him to demand the guarantee of a diplomatic engagement which would be the signal for internal divisions. 'We have thought well,' wrote De Witt to them in an official letter, 'to send you this Act, of which you may make use to bring about the conclusion of the treaty of peace, in such a manner, however, that before handing it over or letting any one know that it has been drawn up and sent to you, you shall use all possible diligence to cause the Protector to renounce it, and to induce him to be satisfied with the compromise. We have every confidence that you will

use all your efforts to act in conformity with these directions in a matter which is of such importance to the State.'

The Grand Pensionary repeated to them, confidentially, on several occasions, the same request. While the States of Holland were thanking them for not having yet delivered up the Act, and exhorting them to redouble their efforts to avoid doing so, he continued to let them know secretly that 'in the event of its being still possible to evade the Act, it would be so much the better.' He promised them, as a reward for the success of this negotiation the gratitude of the members of the Assembly, representing to them, without the slightest hesitation, that the latter were not satisfied with what had taken place. Beverningh and Nieupoort followed his instructions with the most scrupulous fidelity, without allowing themselves to be discouraged by the obstinacy of Cromwell, who, while causing peace to be solemnly proclaimed, had taken care to declare that the treaty would be null and void if the Act of Exclusion were not delivered to him. A fortnight after the vote in favour of the Act of Exclusion, they still persisted in resisting the demands of the secretary of state, Thurloe, pretending that they had received no fresh orders from the States of Holland. The following day, in an audience of three hours with Cromwell himself, they insisted afresh on his renouncing his demands, without allowing him to believe that the Act was voted, and tried to gain time, in the hope of being able to take advantage of some better opportunity. At length, not before May 29, they wrote that all their efforts had proved fruitless, 'the Protector holding to his opinion in so firm and decided a manner that he would prefer, sooner than change his mind, to resort to the last extremities.' Before they were constrained to yield, they had at least spared no effort of resistance.

The noisy opposition of the Orange party had prevented the Protector from making any concession, and it had now closed the last loophole which De Witt was keeping open. Scarcely had the States of Holland decided on the Act of Exclusion than, in spite of the oath of the deputies, the secret was divulged. 'It was beginning to be talked about with great excitement in the boats and coaches.' There remained

now nothing to be done but to release the deputies from their promise of secrecy. The deliberations of the States of Holland having thus been made public, the family of the Prince of Orange, taking advantage of the popular emotion which was being freely expressed, hastened to take measures for obtaining reparation. The Princess Dowager, who courted the good graces of the republican party, would willingly have held aloof; but she did not dare to show herself indifferent to the interests of her grandson, and found herself obliged to act in concert with her daughter-in-law. The two princesses, joined by the Elector of Brandenburg, who shared with them the guardianship of the son of William II., addressed remonstrances to the States of Holland, who contented themselves with receiving them with respectful reserve; they also appealed to the States-General to solicit their intervention. Count William Frederick of Nassau, on his side, 'fearing that, the principal stem of his House being cut down, the branches might also be lopped off,' did not remain inactive. In compliance with his instructions, Hautbois, deputy of Friesland to the States-General, one of the most violent partisans of the Orange party, took the initiative in the Federal Assembly for the purpose of causing a protest to be registered against the private negotiation which Nieupoort and Beverningh had entered into with Cromwell.

The deputies of the other provinces, moved by this proceeding, pressed the deputies of Holland for explanations. The latter represented that they must consult the States of their province; and although the deputies of Groningen did not wish to accord them any delay for the purpose of clearing themselves, the debate was adjourned. When it was resumed, the recriminations against Holland were only embittered. The deputies of Friesland accused her in the most violent manner of usurpation and treason against the republic, 'without regard for the dignity either of the place in which they were speaking or of those to whom they spoke;' they pressed the States-General to take active steps to oblige her to give an account of her conduct. Notwithstanding the vehemence with which the Grand Pensionary replied, the

various provinces approved this proposal. The town of Utrecht alone refused to join in it, but was disavowed by the nobility and clergy of that province, who made common cause with the Orange party. The most hostile feelings were displayed. Some of the deputies to the States-General proposed to brave Cromwell, by proceeding to the immediate nomination of the Prince of Orange as captain- and admiral-general. Others demanded vehemently the recall of Beverningh and Nieupoort. More temperate counsels prevailed. After a stormy sitting, the States-General contented themselves with deciding that the two ambassadors should be desired to communicate the acts and orders which had been sent to them. The deputies of Holland offered in vain to inform the members of the States-General individually of the resolutions which had been come to by the Assembly of their province, in order to avoid a fresh debate, which would make the Protector more determined to exact openly declared submission to his wishes. The States-General wished to constrain the States of Holland te make known publicly the negotiations which they had carried on with Cromwell, and of which the latter claimed to have no account to render, alleging that they had made no engagement except for their own province.

As soon as the Grand Pensionary had informed them of this resolution, the States of Holland, who were sitting in permanence, took steps to prevent at any cost the annulling of the Act of Exclusion, being convinced with good reason that it would inevitably be followed by another war, from which nothing but disasters were to be expected. Believing themselves to be now relieved from all necessity for keeping terms, they determined, in spite of the protest of four opposing towns,[1] that they would authorise their ambassadors to deliver the resolution which had been sent to them. In a confidential letter dated midnight, which gives another proof of the sincerity of his conduct, De Witt wrote to Beverningh and Nieupoort: 'We have learnt with pleasure the efforts which

[1] Haarlem, Leyden, Enckhuyzen, and Alkmar. Three other towns were not represented at the sitting.

you have made to carry out our instructions in order to induce the Protector of England to be satisfied with the compromise concerning the Prince of Orange, and not to persist in demanding the Act which we have sent. But though we had desired and hoped for a more satisfactory result of these efforts, our very serious wish is that you should try once more, without any loss of time, and by every possible and imaginable means, to induce the Protector to consent to the compromise, and that in any case you should persuade him to declare himself clearly on this point, since it is of the highest importance for the service of the country that this affair should be concluded now without delay, either by the ratification of the Clause of Compromise or by the delivering up of the Act.'

On the day following, the States-General having reassembled, the deputies of Holland declared, on behalf of the States of their province, that the latter had done nothing against the union; but they contented themselves with that justification, and gave no information as to the orders addressed to the ambassadors by the Grand Pensionary. The States-General, however, confirmed their resolution of the previous day, in which they enjoined on Beverningh and Nieupoort to communicate the correspondence that had taken place; but they consented to postpone sending their despatch till the States of Holland had had another opportunity of giving them spontaneous satisfaction. The States of Holland, whose precautions had been taken beforehand, had no longer any interest in refusing it. But while granting it, they nevertheless protested against this injunction and asserted their right to settle the interests of their province without the intervention of the Federal Assembly.

'Yesterday,' writes De Witt to Beverningh and Nieupoort, 'we clearly foresaw what has been determined to-day, that the States-General should write to you to order you to send them the copy of the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange. Although we should have preferred, this matter not being within the competence of the province, that it should have happened otherwise, we do not desire that you should be placed

in the difficulty of choosing between our orders and those of the States-General. We therefore permit you, if on the receipt of the missive of the States-General the Act should be still in your possession, to send them a copy of it, observing, however, that we abide by the terms of our letter of yesterday, by which you will regulate your proceedings.' When the States-General met again for their evening sitting, thinking themselves now sure of being obeyed, they addressed, in all confidence, a despatch to the ambassadors, calling upon them to communicate to them without delay the Act of Exclusion. They never imagined that on the previous day the latter had been authorised by the States of Holland to deliver it into the hands of Cromwell.

De Witt had employed every proceeding, every expedient, and even every subterfuge to prevent the ambassadors of the republic receiving the orders of the States-General in time to obey them. Not only did deliberations, skilfully prolonged, delay the despatch of their resolution, so as to enable the messenger of the States of Holland to be beforehand by one day; but, in addition, by excess of precaution, it was drawn up in cipher, in order that the time required by the ambassadors for translating it should give them leisure to acquaint themselves, first, with the letter which conveyed to them the orders of the States of Holland. De Witt had not been mistaken in his able calculations. While Beverningh and Nieupoort, with the assistance of their colleague, Jongesthal, were causing the orders of the States-General to be deciphered, Beverningh received those of the States of Holland, and hastened to obey them. Having demanded of the Protector a final interview in which he renewed useless representations in the hope of inducing Cromwell to desist from his demands, he delivered to him the Act which he could no longer refuse him.

This proceeding anticipated the extreme measures which the States-General were preparing to take, of sending immediate orders of recall to Nieupoort and Beverningh. But, on the other hand, this abrupt conclusion of peace exposed the States of Holland to menacing attempts of vengeance. The

States-General commenced hostilities by protesting against the Act of Exclusion. The States of the Provinces, on their side, fearing the defection of some of their deputies in the Federal Assembly, took care to recall those who were suspected of being favourable to Holland. But a plan of campaign was wanting, and they confined themselves to isolated proposals, without being able to agree in carrying them into execution. Friesland denounced Beverningh and Nieupoort as state criminals who ought to be excluded from the assemblies of the republic, and joined with Zealand in opposing the nomination of Beverningh as treasurer-general by annulling the votes that had been previously given to him. The States of Groningen urged the other provinces to address interpellations to Holland, and to send her each in turn deputations commissioned to insist upon the revocation of the Act of Exclusion; they proposed, moreover, a speedy retaliation by demanding the nomination of the young prince as captain-general.

The States of Holland were too well accustomed to such demonstrations to allow themselves to be taken by surprise. They began by appeasing the animosity of the two Princesses of Orange, to whom they showed the most courteous deference. The Grand Pensionary, accompanied by several deputies, visited them for the purpose of giving a fresh denial to the false reports which were being circulated to the effect that the States would concede to Cromwell their expulsion. He represented to them that the States had done everything to evade the necessity for the Act of Exclusion, and that they did not despair of finding another favourable opportunity of proving their good-will towards the House of Orange. These conciliatory measures diverted the two princesses gradually from the path on which they had at first entered, and the fear of irrevocably compromising the cause of the young prince soon induced them to moderate their behaviour.

The Princess Royal, yielding to the pacific counsels of her wisest adviser, Beverwaert, gave notice that she intended to confide in the affection of the States of Holland, in the hope that they would eventually take her son under their protection. She promised to do nothing ‘ to solicit the provinces or to stir

up the people,' and she quitted the Hague in order to proceed to Spa. The Princess Dowager, in her studied eagerness to appear satisfied, paid no heed even to proprieties. According to the report made to John de Witt, she declared 'that she was so devoted to the public interests, that if she had had a voice in the Assembly of Holland, having regard to the explanations which had been given her, she would not, in this matter, have voted differently from the States themselves.' She did not follow up the protest which she had thought herself bound to make. When, therefore, the Count of Nassau, now isolated, prepared to make a fresh appeal to the provinces in favour of the young prince, the friendly representations of the States of Holland sufficed to arrest the execution of this project.

Having nothing to fear for the moment from the Orange party, the States of Holland took advantage of their restored security to justify themselves by an appeal to public opinion. A report, in which De Witt was chiefly concerned, was carefully drawn up by a committee, with the consent of all the members of the Assembly except the deputies of Leyden and Edam. It was read to the States of Holland in two consecutive sittings of the States-General occupying five hours. The States of Holland offered not to publish it if the other provinces would consent on their side to the suppression of their documents; but passions were too much involved for this offer to be accepted, and the report was forthwith ordered to be printed. A Latin translation appeared necessary to ensure for it diplomatic publicity, and Thysius, the professor of elocution at Leyden, was commissioned to prepare it.

This long report, as learnedly worked out as a mathematical demonstration, and known under the name of the 'Deduction of the States of Holland,' was the manifesto of the political party represented by this Assembly. It began by setting forth the negotiations carried on with Cromwell to evade the Act of Exclusion, and imputed their failure to the imprudent hostility of the States-General, which had deterred Cromwell from coming to an agreement. It disavowed all responsibility on the part of the States of Holland, alleging the tardy communica-

tions of the ambassadors, without, however, mentioning the first despatches which the latter had addressed to the Grand Pensionary. The most conclusive arguments were then cleverly adduced to prove the necessity and the legality of the convention concluded with the English Government; according to this statement, the Act of Exclusion had been the means of safety for the republic, threatened with being the victim of a fresh war if Holland had refused to Cromwell the concession on which the Protector had made the treaty of peace to depend. Moreover, this Act did not exceed the powers which the provinces had often used, without having ever been accused of failing in their federal obligations. In making agreements with Cromwell, therefore, relative to the government of their province, the States of Holland might with good reason claim that they had only consented to a private convention which in no way concerned the rights of the other members of the union, or those of the States-General.

They were not satisfied with exculpating themselves. Having made it clear that they had not abused their rights, they were bent upon proving that they had made good use of them. The Act of Exclusion was defended, in the second part of their memorandum, as a measure of wise policy, which would ensure to their province the guarantee of its liberty against any attempt at subjection, and would thus prevent a renewal of the attempt of which the last Stadtholder, William II., had nearly made them the victims. No consideration was omitted in bringing forward the testimony of history to the imprudence of nations who had favoured the elevation of a princely family, and the dangers of hereditary offices under a republic were carefully compared with the guarantees given to the confederation of the United Provinces by a government of assemblies.

With regard to the services rendered by the House of Orange, the States of Holland recalled the fact that they had been already largely remunerated; to prove that they had amply repaid their debt of gratitude, they had recourse to the statement of a calculation which resembled a bill, and which marred this last argument by reasonings as paltry as they

were misplaced. They concluded by referring to the preference shown by the States of Friesland and Groningen to the Count of Nassau over the son of William II., in order to prove that they had nothing to reproach themselves with when they refused him admission to power. In thus attaching the Act of Exclusion to the principles of their constitution, instead of making it the mark of their submission to England, the States of Holland claimed to have their resolution considered not only as irrevocable but also as spontaneous, and flattered themselves that they saved their dignity in not appearing to yield to the injunctions of England.

Fresh acts of imprudence on the part of the States of Zealand brought this humiliation upon the republic. The complaints and demands which they addressed solemnly to Cromwell, without any possible hope of his consenting, in consideration of them, to renounce the Act which had been delivered to him, could not fail to irritate the Protector. They were followed accordingly by two letters, in which, under cover of friendly assurances, he notified to them that a rupture would follow the revocation of the Act of Exclusion. This declaration had been suggested to him by De Witt, who, even at the risk of failing, by too obsequious an attitude, in the reserve which he had hitherto maintained, was bent upon preventing the danger of fresh debates. 'There is no surer mode of ending them,' he wrote to Beverningh, 'than for the Protector to let it be clearly known that he only ratified the treaty in order to obtain the Act of Exclusion, and that he will from this time forward steadfastly refuse to renounce it.' In thus forcing Cromwell to declare himself, the Grand Pensionary no longer had any need to fear encouraging him in his exactions; he only wished that the other provinces should not be allowed to think that they might with impunity escape from the obligations which had been imposed on Holland. He was restraining them from a hazardous policy and rendering fresh services to the republic by the care he took that Peace, his beloved child, should not perish in its cradle. The other provinces were henceforth obliged to refrain from useless displays of annoyance. 'The affair and

the child will now be left to sleep,' writes Beverningh to De Witt. This prevision was justified. The States of Guelders, after determining that they would demand from the States-General the nomination of the young Prince of Orange as captain- and admiral-general, postponed their proposal. The States of Zealand, not following up their resolution of claiming the powers of Stadtholder for their province, contented themselves with publishing a refutation of the 'Deduction of the States of Holland;' and, in order not to appear to be wanting in arguments, the latter responded to their complaints by a fresh manifesto.

Thus terminated this negotiation, which gave to the United Provinces the blessing of peace, without which the safety of the republic would have been irrevocably compromised. Holland had entered upon the war unwillingly, and might with good reason impute it to the provocations of the Orange party. She bore the chief burden of it, and suffered its hardest blows. Could it be expected that she should prefer to be its victim sooner than sacrifice the rights of the Prince of Orange, while she had reason to fear that the elevation to power of the son of William II. might be fatal to the government which she had chosen and which she wished to preserve? Such an effort of virtue has no place in any, even the most scrupulous policy. De Witt and Cromwell may assuredly have had identical interests, but it suffices for the honour of the Grand Pensionary that he was no accomplice of the Protector's exactions, and history may record as a final verdict the opinion of Chanut, the French ambassador, who, after severely criticising his conduct, did him tardy justice in the following terms: 'Any idea of a preconcerted understanding between the chiefs of Holland and the Protector was only a false supposition. The truth was that, by reason of the inferiority of their forces and of their resources, the States had ceased to place any hopes of safety in their troops and ships. They were running after peace with such precipitation, that they preferred to accept it in a hurry and at a disadvantage rather than to be deprived of it.'

However this might be, by consenting to the Act of Ex-

clusion, when forced to accept it, Holland had entered into engagements which deprived her of the free possession of herself, and rendered her dependent on a foreign government; she had, moreover, struck a blow at the integrity of the diplomatic authority which should have belonged to the States-General. She might in future incur the reproach of having lent herself, if only by submission, to a policy of abasement which affected the whole republic. It was necessary for her to wipe it out in future by repairing the humiliations of a disastrous war. Having purchased peace on onerous conditions, and imposed it on the other provinces, she could only secure pardon for it by making it salutary and glorious for the confederation. John de Witt's ministry was to enable her to accomplish this work of reparation.

It had needed nothing less than his dexterity and perseverance to triumph over the troubles of war abroad, and at the same time to restore internal peace. His great political qualities had quickly ripened in the stern school of events. His adversaries could not baffle him; he opposed to them, as he writes to Beverningh, 'sometimes the most imperturbable coolness, sometimes the most impetuous vivacity, without finding any difficulty in giving sharp rejoinders.' The reports of the sittings in the States confirmed by contemporaneous testimony show him always in the front, now bearing the burden of the most important debates, in which he took part with indefatigable ardour, now resisting the force of passions which spared neither his policy nor his person, now making unheard-of efforts to extricate himself from the difficulties in which he was placed by the letters of the ambassadors, constantly skirting without injury the rocks of a double negotiation, at once public and private, in which he might be accused of having gone beyond his instructions, equal to everything and providing for every contingency, without ever allowing himself to be discouraged or disconcerted.

The instrument of his power was the Assembly which had chosen him as minister, and over which he had succeeded in gaining the mastery. If the least weakness were displayed, he left no stone unturned to restore discipline and enforce obe-

dience to himself. The deputies of Dordrecht to the Assembly of the States having abstained from voting at an important sitting, when justification of the Act of Expulsion was in question, he wrote to his father: 'I cannot refrain from saying that I saw with extraordinary surprise (at a moment when peace and the liberty of our dear country would be clearly in danger, without the prudent and wise assistance of brave men) the conduct held by the town of Dordrecht, which had never before failed on similar occasions. She sent here deputies who, at the mere name of a child and the receipt of a letter from two widowed princesses, allowed themselves to be intimidated to such an extent that they ignominiously deserted their post without its being possible to induce them to resume the places which had been assigned to them, in spite of reiterated interpellations. I ask you, therefore, very humbly to act with still greater vigilance towards them, for a vessel may sometimes, from the inexperience of an ignorant pilot, strike against a rock or a sandbank in such a manner that the most skilful navigator would not know how to get her afloat again. If we had not been so much on our guard here, we should doubtless never have returned to port.' The authority which he exercised with such vigilant and imperious energy was due to the confidence he had gained and on which he could depend. On one occasion, when he had repulsed in the Assembly of the States-General the violent attacks of the deputies of Friesland, indignantly denouncing 'their false assertions, their injurious invectives, and the violence of their language, such as civilised men should never make use of towards one another,' he was obliged to justify himself for the words which were imputed to him. The States of Holland, as soon as they met, interposed to take up his defence, and gave him public testimony of their approbation. He found thus steadfast support in their loyal co-operation.

It was for their cause that he had never ceased to work, and he had now ensured its success by depriving the States-General of all power over their independence, and thus freeing them from any subjection to the federal authority. From the very outset of his political career he had declared

himself the resolute partisan of this autonomy, which constituted the programme of his policy. 'The English,' he wrote to one of the ambassadors in England a year before he was nominated Grand Pensionary, 'call the United Provinces a republic; but these provinces do not form one republic. Each province by itself is a sovereign republic; the United Provinces ought not to be called a republic, in the singular, but federal, or united republics, in the plural. The vote in favour of the Act of Exclusion was an assertion of this provincial sovereignty. By putting it beyond the reach of attack, De Witt had ensured the duration of the government whose destinies were confided to him, and which possessed in him the brilliant personification of a great statesman.

CHAPTER IV.

A GOVERNMENT GAINING IN STRENGTH. THE REPUBLIC AT PEACE AT HOME, AND POWERFUL ABROAD.

The Orange party—Its chief the Prince of Nassau—His forces—Change of government in the province of Overyssel—The republican party—It is led by the States of Holland—Ascendency of the Grand Pensionary de Witt—Appointments to military commands, to the courts of justice, to important offices—Relations of the States of Holland with the States-General—Disputes about jurisdiction—Trial of John of Messen—Vacancy in the post of major general—Agreement between De Witt and the Prince of Nassau—Projected union—Internal government of Holland—Reduction of rate of interest—It is the work of John de Witt—Obedience enforced on the army and the clergy—Administrative measures—Attempt at coalition amongst the other provinces for the nomination of a major-general—It is baffled by the States of Holland—Their supremacy—First re-election of John de Witt as Grand Pensionary—Foreign relations of the United Provinces—Naval expeditions—Prosperity of the Colonies—Embassy on behalf of the Waldenses—Dangers of a rupture with France—De Thou ambassador at the Hague—Disputes settled—Negotiations with England—First mission of Downing to the Hague—Mutual concessions—Continuation of hostilities with Portugal—Wars in the North—Fears of the preponderance of Sweden—Alliance with the Elector of Brandenburg—His defection—Intervention on behalf of Dantzic—Treaty of Elbing—Invasion of Denmark by the King of Sweden—The States assist Denmark—Their naval victory in the Sound—Mediation—Convention of the Hague—Battle of Funen gained by the Swedes—Capture of Nyburg—Treaty of Copenhagen—The United Provinces resume their position in Europe.

Free governments do not permit statesmen the easy satisfaction of crushing all opposition, but impose upon them the necessity of constantly renewed struggles. The Grand Pensionary de Witt was not to be spared these during the whole duration of his ministry; he had still a hard task to accomplish before he could succeed by persevering efforts in making Holland mistress of the government of the republic.

The Orange party, humiliated and irritated by the Act of

Exclusion, was not disarmed, and had found at last the chief who had till now been wanting. Count William Frederick of Nassau, after long hesitation, had at length responded to its appeal. Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, grand master of the artillery, having recently married the daughter of the Princess Dowager and become thus the uncle of the young son of William II., he had shortly before obtained from the Emperor of Germany the title of prince. Notwithstanding the authority conferred on him by his birth, his parentage, and the offices he held, he had remained in retirement after the death of the last Stadtholder. The indecision of his character, which is referred to by the French ambassador, Chanut, had prevented him from placing himself at the head of the Orange party. He had, moreover, been discouraged by the ill-will of the Princess Dowager and by the persistent hostility of the Princess Royal, who both feared to find in him a rival to the Prince of Orange. The popular discontents provoked by the war with England and the negotiations relative to the Act of Exclusion had, however, aroused his ardour. The occasion seemed to him favourable for appearing once more on the scene and for displaying his loyalty to the House of Orange. 'If you will not give anything to the young prince,' he wrote to one of his confidants, 'you must at least take nothing from him, which would be unjust, cruel and wicked. It is not to be found in any history that merits so great have ever been recompensed by such heathenish ingratitude. Spain, who was such an enemy of his House, has not deprived the prince of the hope of one day being one of her generals. Thus, you may see from this how unjust those of the republic have been towards the prince in declaring him excluded from the offices of his ancestors. Neither will God leave them unpunished, I am certain; the Almighty hates ingratitude too deeply.'

To prepare the way for the success of a restoration the Prince of Nassau was forming plans both of alliance and of insurrection. He was trying to interest Mazarin in the Orange cause by declaring himself in favour of a treaty with France, and was negotiating to obtain the support of the

French Government in the event of Cromwell, not content with the engagements entered into with him by Holland, choosing to interpose with the view of obliging the States-General to acknowledge the Act of Exclusion. At the same time that he was trying to obtain the assistance of foreign troops he was redoubling his efforts to levy partisans in North Holland, which he visited under pretence of inspecting some of the garrisons. He tried to gain over the commander-in-chief of the army, Major-General Brederode, who wrote to John de Witt: 'He made so much of me that I was ashamed, and made me speeches that I should not like to confide to paper.'

He was surrounded in the States-General and in the States of the Provinces by numerous deputies who encouraged his hopes. In Guelders his most faithful ally was Huyghens de Zuylichem, the former secretary of William II., deputy of Arnheim, who had enriched himself by three consecutive marriages, was allied to the family of the late Grand Pensionary of Holland, Pauw d'Heemstede, and combined literary merits with all the qualities of a statesman. Beside him the two brothers Henry and Alexander Van der Capellen, sons of the former chancellor of Guelders, distinguished themselves by their devotion to the interests of the Orange party. In Zealand, Peter de Huybert, afterwards pensionary of the province, and John de Mauregnault, deputy to the States-General, were even more ardent and kept up a constant correspondence with the Prince of Nassau. In the province of Utrecht, Reede van Renswoude, who had filled the post of ambassador at the court of Charles I., rallied around him all those who regretted the ancient power of the Stadtholders. In Overyssel, the two most trusted representatives of the Orange party were Mulart, whose wealth aided his ambition, and Ripperda, one of the negotiators of the Peace of Munster, who by his marriage had become a member of one of the principal families of the nobility of Holland. In Friesland and Groningen, the more zealous of the partisans of the House of Orange encouraged one another. Amongst them were, in Friesland, Van Haren, whose son afterwards rendered signal services to the republic by his embassies, and Joachim André,

one of the confidants of the Prince of Nassau; in the province of Groningen, Eisenga, burgomaster of the town, Hautbois, burgomaster of Sneck, and Clant, 'a quiet and peaceable man, whose private interests attached him to the Princes of Orange.'

The temper of the various provinces, who could not forgive Holland for concluding the peace with England, raised the hopes of the Orange party, and seemed to guarantee their co-operation. Friesland and Groningen, of which provinces the Prince of Nassau was Stadtholder, had everything to gain from the success of a restoration that would secure for their deputies the good offices of those in authority. Zealand, on her side, might almost be called a fief of the Princes of Orange on account of the great domains they possessed there, and which constituted them the greatest landowners in the province. She had already declared herself more than once in favour of the nomination of the young prince, either as Stadtholder of the province or as captain- or admiral-general. She had, moreover, been foremost in her remonstrances against the Act of Exclusion and had never ceased to demand its revocation. Guelders, which, as an ancient duchy, had a right to the highest rank in the States-General, showed jealousy of the preponderance of Holland; the families of rank who inhabited that province regretted the offices about the court and the military commands they had enjoyed under the Princes of Orange. The two orders of the nobility and the clergy of Utrecht shared the same sentiments and in 1654 demanded the immediate restoration of the stadtholdership of the province. In Overyssel, an eager party, impatient to hasten events, had the young prince chosen as Stadtholder, and nominated the Prince of Nassau to act as lieutenant during his minority. The Princesses of Orange, informed of the resolution of the States of Overyssel, eagerly testified their gratitude, and the Orange party held itself in readiness to take advantage of this election in order to reinstate the son of William II. in the offices of his ancestors.

This fresh coalition seemed to threaten Holland with the most formidable dangers. But it was speedily dissolved by

unavoidable dissensions of which she took advantage. In Zealand, the town of Middleburg separated itself from the Orange party, from the fear that a change of government would render inevitable a renewal of the war with England, from which her trade must suffer. 'Most of the partisans of the House of Orange, especially in this province,' we read in a contemporary letter, 'have only followed the popular current, for just now, the people being tired of crying "Long live the Prince!" and being occupied with other matters, fresh disputes have caused the old ones to be forgotten.' As for Guelders, she was skilfully won over and her interest satisfied. The States of Holland had already made themselves answerable for that province's share of the subsidies due to the King of Denmark; they now proposed to her the most advantageous mode of repayment, by charging her with the maintenance of three Dutch regiments, and thus putting at her disposal several military appointments. In the province of Utrecht, the capital, which kept up a close intercourse with Amsterdam, declared itself against the nobles and in favour of the republican government. In Friesland, the jealousy of the nobles and the obstinate arrogance that was displayed endangered the authority of the Prince of Nassau. In the province of Groningen, the rivalry between the town and the country, the *Ommelandes*, dominated the great interests of political parties and roused the animosity of local passions. Finally, in Overyssel, the resistance of Deventer opposed to the provincial States assembled at Zwoll the authority of a rival assembly in which certain members of the nobility and some deputies of the smaller towns took their seats. The Orange party could not have taken possession of the province without the aid of military intervention, which the States of Holland hastened to prevent. They began by forbidding the officers commanding troops in their pay to take any part in these dissensions, and prevailed on the States-General to issue the same prohibition to the troops of the other provinces. The civil war was thus kept within limits, and could no longer be either extended or prolonged.

By the aid of these domestic quarrels and 'with the help

of concessions which they knew how to make,' the States of Holland gained numerous partisans. The burgomasters of the large towns, amongst others Beck, burgomaster of Deventer, and Holck, burgomaster of Utrecht, declared themselves on their side, as did the principal deputies of Guelders, such as Dorth, one of the wealthiest men in the province; Bronkhorst, who aspired to the reputation of being independent of the prince and preferred to be distinguished as the friend of liberty, and Van Ghent, 'who, without any great fortune, lived in a somewhat expensive style, and who, having hitherto been on very intimate terms with the Princess Dowager, now appeared disposed to change sides with the change of fortune,' the Grand Pensionary de Witt having obtained for his eldest son a regiment of infantry, and thus made him favourable to the interests of Holland. Even in the province which was the head-quarters of the Orange party, Zealand, the pensionary of Middleburg, Adrien Veth, declared himself altogether devoted to liberty. He was an honest, incorruptible, bold, eloquent, and loquacious man, who possessed useful allies in his brother and in his brother-in-law, Rugersborg, the one burgomaster, the other town councillor; he possessed the entire confidence of the pensionary of the province, John de Brune, whom he was to succeed some years later. 'Holland is the mistress of many offices which gain for her votes,' wrote the correspondent of the English minister Thurloe from the Hague; 'she appoints to many embassies, to numerous military commands; she can, as is said, give away entire provinces, and she possesses baits for attracting to herself the foxes who scent out their advantage.'

De Witt occupied himself with far-seeing solicitude in this skilful handling of private interests with which statesmen, even the most rigid, cannot with impunity dispense. He held in his hands all the springs of government. Ruling the States of Holland by his authority as first minister, he eventually succeeded in putting in subjection to them the Assembly of the States-General, the great military commands and the court of justice, thus ensuring to the citizens of Holland, already possessed of the chief authority in the town councils,

that political supremacy for which they would be indebted to him.

The secretary of the States-General, Nicholas Ruysch, who shared with the Grand Pensionary of Holland the chief functions of government in the Federal Assembly, was one of the most devoted partisans of his policy. He had succeeded Musch, son-in-law of the former Grand Pensionary Cats, who had been devoted to the interests of the Prince of Orange, and who, accustomed to be at the service of every government that paid him, had been obliged to resign in order to escape being condemned as guilty of venality. De Witt had succeeded Ruysch as pensionary of Dordrecht before being elected Grand Pensionary of Holland. They were thus related to one another by a common origin and by the tradition of the same offices held in succession. Their family ties and similarity of opinions promoted an intimacy which lasted twenty years and was never troubled. During the entire duration of Ruysch's term of office, which he held till his death, his loyal co-operation enable De Witt to assume and to keep the direction of the States-General.

The fleet and the army had, moreover, passed under the dominion of the party of Holland. While the powers of admiral of the fleet, which had been vacant since the death of Tromp, were exercised by Admiral Wassenaar d'Obdam, who had omitted no advances to the new authorities, Major-General Brederode had under his command the land forces. John de Brederode, descended from the ancient Counts of Holland, had distinguished himself under the Stadtholder Frederick Henry by his brilliant military services, in recompense of which he had been made first lieutenant to the captain-general. The post of captain-general not having been filled up after the death of William II., the chief command devolved on him. Having contracted a second marriage with the elder sister of the Princess Dowager, Louise Christine of Solms, and thus become by alliance great-uncle of the young Prince of Orange, he had violently broken with the traditions of his family by voting for the Act of Exclusion. This defection had lost him the public esteem. On the occasion of a popular

entertainment at the Hague, he wished to offer wine to the passers-by in front of his house: some refused, others accepted without saluting him. Some months later, having accompanied the Prince of Nassau and the Princess Dowager on a journey, he heard the name of Cromwell murmured in his ear as a term of reproach bestowed on him. Anxious to gain the good graces of the republican party, in order to obtain in the event of the appointment of a captain-general the reversion of the military authority of William II., he had paid assiduous court to John de Witt and gave him many proofs of his confidence. 'If, in our province, and especially in our body of nobility,' he wrote to him, 'there is the slightest hesitation on any occasion, I beg you will declare publicly that I give my vote in accordance with your wise and just opinion.' He was thus a devoted and docile ally of the Grand Pensionary.

The successive vacancies of the two presidencies of the great courts of justice had given the party of Holland still further opportunity for favouring its followers. Although the two courts were common to Holland and Zealand, Holland, in consequence of the number of her councillors and the turns of presidentship which had been assigned to her, had easily ensured for herself the pre-eminence. The president of the provincial court, Wyngaerden, having been pronounced unfit to continue his functions, the States of Holland nominated as his successor one of those who had gained for themselves the greatest right to their confidence, John Dedel. They obtained the sanction of the States of Zealand, and induced them to proceed conjointly to his installation. Two years later, a successor being required for the president of the grand council, Cornelius Haga, who had just died, the States of Holland invited the States of Zealand to a full meeting, in which they caused their candidate, Reynier Pauw Van der Horst, to be chosen. With regard to appointments that only depended upon their own Assembly, they could not fail to be even more favourable to the most decided partisans of the new government. Thus they reserved for Cornelius de Witt, brother of John de Witt, the office of Ruard of Putten, one of the best in the province, from the extent of its functions,

which included those of bailiff and of *dijkgraaf*, or superintendent of dykes, in one of the most important districts in the province.

The Orange party, who had not yet desisted from their struggle in the other provinces, appeared to have capitulated in Holland. Their chief representatives had been superseded in the States; some had been driven from them; the rest only wished to continue quietly in the enjoyment of the posts which they occupied by causing themselves to be forgotten. Cornelius Aerssens van Sommelsdyck, who had been compromised in the expedition of William II. against Amsterdam, had only obtained the benefits of the amnesty by retiring from the Assembly of the province. Bronkhorst, lord of Wimmenum, on whom the partisans of the old government thought they could count, 'was too wise to confound his interests with those of the House of Orange, and, in spite of the authority conferred on him by his numerous functions, he renounced the pretensions of leader of the party, which he had been unable to support.' Senior of the body of nobles, 'although his family was not amongst the most illustrious or the most ancient in the country, he was president of the board of councillor deputies, and joined to those important functions those of curator of the University of Leyden, of grand huntsman of Holland, and of bailiff and superintendent of dykes in the district of Rhynland. He had thus secured to himself an income exceeding 20,000 florins, and had no ambition beyond that of retaining it.

The growing strength of the new government had increased the number of its followers. In addition to the men who served its cause in the embassies, such as Kaiser, Nieupoort, Beverningh, and Van Beuningen, others showed no less loyalty and zeal as deputies or pensionaries of the towns. Amongst the nobility, Noordwyck, governor of Sluys, made public profession of his attachment to the maxims of the dominant party and pronounced boldly at the Hague the word republic. Besides the Grand Pensionary of Holland, John de Witt, and the secretary of the States-General, Ruysch, the town of Dordrecht contained quite a body of statesmen: Cornelius

van Beveren, auditor-general, and Jacob Beveren van Zwyndrecht, who had married the sister of John de Witt and was a deputy to the States of Holland; Slingelandt, pensionary of the town, and afterwards secretary of the State Council of the Confederation, and Anthony Vivien, first cousin of John de Witt, who succeeded Slingelandt in his municipal office. Bol, one of the magistrates of Haarlem, who became councillor deputy of Holland, is mentioned in the diplomatic correspondence of the time as possessing the entire confidence of the Grand Pensionary. Meerman, son of a lawyer of Leyden and pensionary of Delft, a bold and audacious young man, who was commissioned to prepare the publication of the golden book or register of the resolutions of the Assembly of Holland, was already reckoned amongst the most energetic defenders of the authority of the States.

At Amsterdam, the family which John de Witt had entered by his marriage had supreme power in the magistracy. His wife's uncles, Cornelius Bicker van Swieten, former burgomaster, whose courage had saved Amsterdam by preventing the Stadtholder William II. from taking it by surprise; Cornelius de Graëff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, one of the principal members of the town council and councillor deputy of Holland, and Andrew de Graëff, successively councillor and burgomaster, placed their experience and authority at the service of the young minister of the province. They increased their influence by introducing into the town council fresh and young recruits: Van Hoorn, one of the confidants of the Grand Pensionary, who was shortly afterwards made burgomaster, and De Groot, who continued to the last one of John de Witt's most devoted partisans, and who was appointed soon after to the office of pensionary of the town. The republican party found in these men the most valuable servants, who guaranteed to them a loyalty that was beyond doubt, and the most valuable co-operation. 'We experience, thank God, more and more every day in the province of Holland greater sympathy, harmony, and confidence amongst the members of our Assembly,' wrote De Witt to one of the ambassadors of the republic.

This good understanding ensured to the States of Holland the free exercise of their authority. They took advantage of it to rid themselves of all dependence on the States-General. Two incidents, the trial of the councillors of Brazil and the nomination of Beverningh as treasurer-general, will suffice to show the resistance which they opposed to the domination of the latter.

After the loss of Brazil, which was retaken from the republic by the Portuguese during the war with England, the two councillors of the colony, Haëck and Schonenburg, and Lieutenant-General Schaep, who commanded the troops under their orders, had been impeached; the States-General had referred the case to the council of state of the confederation. John de Witt, as soon as he was informed of this resolution, fearing that the States-General might take advantage of it to extend the prerogatives of their jurisdiction, undertook to prevail on the States of Holland to claim their right of judging one of the two councillors of Brazil, Haëck, who was a native of Holland. A compromise was at length proposed and accepted. The States-General appointed judges for Haëck and Schonenburg; but the judges they selected were those belonging to the provinces of which the two councillors were natives. Haëck was arraigned before the court of Holland, Schonenburg before the court of Groningen, and the trial of Lieutenant-General Schaep was referred to a court-martial. The proceedings ended in an acquittal, and this struggle for jurisdiction, which placed an unfortunate obstacle in the way of the course of justice, struck a blow at the authority of the federal power.

The States of Holland showed themselves no less careful of their prerogatives in refusing to the States-General the right of making an inquiry into the embassy of their deputy Beverningh, who was accused of having suggested to Cromwell the Act of Exclusion. In order to oblige him to render to them an account of his negotiations, the States-General, on the proposal of the deputies of Friesland, determined, so long as he had not exculpated himself, not to allow him to occupy the post of treasurer-general of the republic, to which he had

been named eight months before. The States of Holland, who claimed to be the judges of his conduct, declared that, as the Act of Exclusion only engaged their own province, they alone were qualified to receive his solemn oath of justification. To impress upon the States-General that they must rest content with this, they decided, on the proposal of their Grand Pensionary, that, until his definitive appointment as treasurer-general, Beverningh should sit in the Federal Assembly as an ordinary deputy of the province.

The States of Holland, unable to forget the assistance which the States-General had given successively to the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange, when he had caused their Grand Pensionary, Olden Barneveldt, to be condemned, and to the Stadtholder William II., when he nearly made them the victims of his attempt at a coup d'état, thought they could not take too many precautions to oppose the supremacy of the Federal Assembly. They wished to put into practice the system of government of which John de Witt had drawn up the political programme, and according to which 'the United Provinces, while forming only a single state in their relations with foreign sovereigns, remained none the less seven independent states as regarded their internal affairs.'

Still, their security was not ensured so long as the States-General might attempt to confer on the Prince of Nassau the government of the Confederation. On that account the Grand Pensionary employed numerous confidential agents, in order that he might be enlightened by frequent reports on the prince's conduct and proceedings. He interrogated the burgomasters of Holland with whom the prince had had interviews, removed from Dordrecht the regiment which was under his command, and reinforced the garrison of the Hague with regiments whose officers gave pledges of loyalty to the States. De Witt soon had cause to perceive that his distrust was justified; the preliminaries of the trial of Messen, his chief clerk or secretary,[1] revealed to him the manœuvres which were

[1] The account of this trial has been published in a remarkable article by M. Nedermeijer de Rosenthal, in the *Recueil des pièces historiques et archéologiques du pays*, vol. x. Part III., 1855.

intended to ruin him, and in which the Prince of Nassau had taken part.

John de Messen had occupied with the two last Grand Pensionaries of Holland, Cats and Pauw, the post which he continued to fill after John de Witt had succeeded them. Offended by De Witt's somewhat haughty manners, unable to forgive him the order he had received to speak to him with uncovered head, contrary to custom, and annoyed by the precedence which the Grand Pensionary had given in his office to a new-comer, the lawyer Hallingh, he determined to be revenged. With this view he accepted the overtures which had been made to him by Theodore de Ruyven, treasurer of the Prince of Nassau, and communicated to him the most private matters of which he had daily cognisance. Ruyven was not satisfied with transmitting these to the Prince of Nassau; he conspired with Messen to falsify and pervert the correspondence of John de Witt, in order to arouse implacable resentment against him. Thus he had caused a rumour to be spread that the Grand Pensionary had suggested to Cromwell the Act of Exclusion, that he had even requested that the English fleet should be sent to the coasts of Zealand to overcome the resistance offered by that province to the States of Holland, and that he had gone so far as to advise the Protector to cause, if necessary, some of the towns on the coast to be occupied by his troops. Ruyven supported these false imputations, and persuaded the Prince of Nassau that evident proof had been found in a pretended despatch written by the Grand Pensionary to Beverningh and Nieupoort, the draft of which John de Witt kept carefully concealed in a casket. By the help of these calumnies, he cast on the Grand Pensionary the weight of an accusation which seemed unanswerable. He had even carried the forethought of hatred so far as to keep careful notes of the communications which he forwarded to the Prince of Nassau: he entered them in a journal, and intended to hand them over some day to the young Prince of Orange, in order to convict De Witt of having wished to deprive him of the power of his ancestors by taking the initiative in the Act of Exclusion. The two culprits

could not long conceal their intrigues; De Witt at length became aware of them, and appealed to the court of Holland.

Messen was immediately arrested, and, having been submitted to a preliminary interrogation, his wife was brought before the court, and her avowals, confirmed afterwards by his own, left no doubt as to the guilt of Ruyven. The latter was immediately thrown into prison, and it was necessary to use force in order to obtain possession of the papers which he attempted to conceal.

The Grand Pensionary had now proofs of the misdeeds of his secretary, as well as those of his own justification. He had discovered in Messen's desk the journal kept by Ruyven, who had thus prepared a witness against himself of his own frauds. De Witt took care to refute its assertions by bringing forward the authentic documents. He communicated them to the commissioners of the court, who examined them most minutely. Brought into the presence of his judges, Messen tried to extenuate his faults by alleging that he was ignorant of the use which Ruyven had made of his revelations, averring 'that he had in the end refused them to him.' Ruyven would not at first acknowledge his forgeries; he declared in a preliminary examination that 'out of Christian charity' he pitied Beverningh for having to exonerate himself by oath from having promoted the Act of Exclusion. But when his journal was put before him with the irrefutable annotations of the Grand Pensionary, he was obliged to confess that he had distorted every fact. The latest confidential letters which the Grand Pensionary had exchanged with the ambassadors in England, and which were brought forward in court, completed the discomfiture of Ruyven, and caused entire justice to be done to John de Witt's conduct of the negotiations. Ruyven could not continue to deny that he had known of these despatches, and his dishonesty was thus made evident.

There could be no doubt as to the verdict. Messen was pronounced 'treacherous and infamous,' and banished for ever from the provinces within the jurisdiction of the courts of Holland, Zealand, and the province of Utrecht. Ruyven,

who was apparently the most guilty, was only condemned to exile for six years. The sentence pronounced against him declared his journal to be calumnious, seditious, and scandalous, and prohibited its publication or the preservation of a single copy or fragment under pain of punishment as a disturber of the public peace. The punishment might appear mild for those days, and according to the words attributed to him by a contemporary, 'John de Witt was surprised that only a fox's brush should have been used to chastise the culprits.' 'I could have wished,' he wrote to the ambassador Nieupoort, 'that Ruyven should have been forced to make a still clearer and more complete confession. However, I willingly leave the verdict to others, knowing that, when a judge has satisfied his own conscience, one ought to be content.' The indulgence of the court was easily explained. The respectful reserve which it had shown towards the Prince of Nassau, compromised as he was by his correspondence with Ruyven, by only mentioning him casually in the sentence, and speaking of him only as a person of high position outside the province of Holland, proved how anxious it was to keep on terms with him. In not punishing too severely one of his principal agents, it gave him a no less evident proof of consideration. It feared to incur his resentment, in the anticipation of a speedy turn of fortune in his favour.

The vacancy of the chief command of the army appeared indeed likely to turn to his advantage. Major-General Brederode had just died. Attached, in spite of his relationship, to the cause of the republican government, Brederode had given the first minister of the States of Holland a last mark of confidence by choosing him as one of his executors, though De Witt refused to accept the office, which seemed to him incompatible with his post of Grand Pensionary. His succession could not fail to excite the ambition of the Prince of Nassau, who, in his capacity as Grand Master of the Artillery, occupied the principal military command next to him. He had obtained the withdrawal of his cousin, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, former governor of Brazil, and lieutenant-general of the cavalry, who might have been his

rival; his candidature, which appeared to make his speedy nomination certain, reawakened the hopes of the Orange party. While the greatest honours were paid at Amsterdam to the Princess Dowager, who had come there to negotiate an alliance between her son-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the United Provinces, the dissensions which had been appeased threatened to spring up again even in the Assembly of the States of Holland. The health of John de Witt had kept him absent for a month, and his absence had encouraged the intrigues of those who were trying to supplant him, by asking for him the post of ambassador extraordinary to Sweden, where the interests of the republic might profit by his services.

Fearing that the post of major-general might be conferred by the States-General on the Prince of Nassau without the States of Holland being able to oppose it, the Grand Pensionary undertook to satisfy him, by inducing him to accept the conditions of an agreement. The advances of the Prince of Nassau made reconciliation easier. He had shown his appreciation of the assistance which De Witt had just given him by helping him to settle his differences with the nobility of the province of Groningen. 'I am happy,' he wrote to him, 'in having learnt to know you better, as I have found you quite different from what you were represented to me; for I have found nothing in you that is not honest, upright and just. I hope you have found me also different from the reports that have been made to you about me, as I am of quite another sort of temper and principle, not at all overbearing or ambitious, but loving justice and moderation.' The trial of Ruyven and Messen could only confirm him in the favourable dispositions which he displayed, by convincing him that he had entertained unjust prejudices against De Witt.

The Grand Pensionary took advantage of these sentiments to obtain frequent interviews with the Prince of Nassau, 'about which the bolder republicans began to be uneasy.' He explained to him the advantages of a mutual understanding, and negotiated with him secretly with regard to the post

of major-general. Having obtained his consent, he easily induced the States of Holland to accept a proposal which was submitted to the States-General on the report of Van Ghent, deputy of Guelders, and to which the name of Project of Harmony was given. By the terms of this agreement, the States of Holland undertook to nominate the Prince of Nassau major-general, provided this post was declared incompatible with that of stadtholder. The Prince of Nassau was, however, confirmed in his office of stadtholder of the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, and only called upon to renounce the lieutenancy to the stadtholdership of Overyssel; but he was bound, on the other hand, to engage by oath to observe the treaty of peace concluded with Cromwell, and to undertake nothing against the Act of Exclusion. The exclusion of the son of William II. was thus ratified, and, according to the shrewd remark of a contemporary, 'what had hitherto only been painted in water-colours was now painted in oils.' Moreover, this separation between the civil and the military authority, which the Grand Pensionary made the constant aim of his policy, allowed a leader to be given to the army without exposing Holland to the domination of a master, and thus guaranteed her against the danger of a change of government. 'The Project of Harmony is a proof of your great prudence and wisdom,' wrote one of his uncles to De Witt, and De Witt, not concealing his satisfaction, expressed it thus to his father: 'I cannot wish for anything better than what I have obtained.'

The opposition of the Orange party, who could not forgive the Prince of Nassau for his compliance, put difficulties in the way of the execution of these conventions. The provinces of Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen obstinately refused to make the promises demanded of them. But Holland gained rather than lost by this ill-will. To obtain her consent to his nomination as major-general, the Prince of Nassau resigned his office as lieutenant to the stadtholdership of Overyssel, and thus alienated the partisans of the restoration, who, no longer reckoning on his services, continued to leave vacant the post they had destined for him. This disunion

disarmed the Orange party, and the States of Holland had no longer for the moment anything to fear from its enterprises.

They took advantage of this security to strengthen their government. They had already given all their attention to the good administration of their finances, and had thus ensured the resources necessary for acquiring the political preponderance which was to render them the masters of the confederation. The charges which the budget of their province had to support annually exceeded the receipts, and made Holland resemble a fine edifice with a splendid exterior but whose foundations were undermined and ruined. The Grand Pensionary set to work with the most vigilant care to restore by order and economy the good administration of the public revenues. He obtained, by degrees, the suppression of privileges exempting from taxation, the revision of arbitrarily conferred pensions, the retrenchment of superfluous allowances for the benefit of the army and the more equal distribution amongst the provinces of diplomatic expenditure, which had risen from 79,154 to 237,462 florins,[1] but was in future to be laid to the charge of the federal budget, instead of being almost exclusively borne by Holland.

Still, this reduction of expenses did not suffice to put an end to the deficit; it was necessary, in order to restore the financial balance, to have recourse to a more efficacious measure, for which Holland was indebted to the Grand Pensionary. The sums which she had been obliged to borrow in order to carry on the war with Spain, after the expiration of the ten years' truce, had imposed too heavy a burden on her finances. Her debt had risen to 153,000,000 florins, of which 140,000,000 were borrowed at interest, requiring an annual payment amounting to 6,907,700 florins. By reducing these annuities from five to four per cent., John de Witt freed Holland from engagements which were exhausting her resources.

This operation was difficult to carry through. Already, in 1640, the interest on the funded debt of Holland had been reduced from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to 5 per cent., but this saving had not effected

[1] In 1663 the Grand Pensionary increased these expenses to 258,309 florins in spite of the opposition of some of the provinces.

any reduction in the expenditure, which had even increased by 500,000 florins owing to the expenses of the war. It seemed rash to renew fifteen years later an operation which had failed in its object once before, and which involved the risk of destroying the confidence of the creditors of the State. The latter would besides be very little inclined towards a measure which deprived them of part of their income; and as they were to be found principally among the magistrates of the towns of whom the States' deputies were the delegates, the plans of the Grand Pensionary might be hindered. No sooner, indeed, did he make them known than several towns, amongst which were Leyden and Alkmar, refused their consent; others, of which Rotterdam was one, demanded that the reduction should not be beyond 4½ per cent. But at the end of five months all the members of the Assembly, sacrificing private to public interest, had allowed themselves to be convinced, and on the report of Van Beuningen the plan of the Grand Pensionary was definitively adopted.

Holland thus gained an annual saving in interest of 1,400,000 florins, representing a capital of 28,000,000 florins. The rights of the fundholders were no less considered than the interests of the treasury; a delay of two months was granted them to demand repayment, if they would not consent to the reduction. This scrupulous respect shown by a republic to its creditors might be advantageously compared with the summary proceedings which took place in France, and of which Boileau complains in the following terms:—

> . . . . . plus pâle qu'un rentier,
> A l'aspect d'un arrêt qui retranche un quartier.

By reducing the payment of interest from 7,000,000 to 5,600,000 florins, the States of Holland did more than save themselves from a present difficulty; they took their measures for the future and secured a sinking fund. They appropriated to this the interest, amounting to 1,400,000 florins, which they saved by the reduction of interest, added to it 250,000 florins which they saved out of their ordinary estimates by means of the reduction of the army, and thus employed, with the interest of the capital sunk, about 2,000,000 florins for

the gradual redemption of the debt, which they hoped to pay off entirely in a space of forty-one years. In order to save the credit of their province from all risk of danger, the States of Holland induced the States-General to follow their example in reducing the federal debt, the amount of which was inconsiderable; by putting an end to all further transactions in the 5 per cents., they prevented their own 4 per cents. falling into disfavour. The increased means which they obtained by the conversion of their debt and the prudent manner in which they were employed, could only strengthen the security of their creditors, and ensure themselves against any demand of repayment. The Grand Pensionary's experiment was henceforth completely successful. He spoke of the conversion of the funds as 'the important affair on which he had bestowed all his strength, in order to gain for Holland greater respect at home and abroad.' He had thus applied with advantage the maxims of political economy which had been the object of his persevering studies, and borrowed from financial science far-sighted combinations with which the other European States had not yet become familiarised.

Secured against the aggression of the other provinces by their agreement with the Prince of Nassau, possessing pledges of internal security in the good administration of their finances, 'which gained them the popular favour and placed them in a better position than any monarch for making laws for their subjects,' the States of Holland were ceaselessly occupied in all measures favourable to the preservation of the republican form of government. With this view, they took steps to secure themselves with regard to the army and the clergy. To avert any military movement which might place their authority in danger, they reconstituted the regiment of guards which had continued quartered at the Hague, and divided it into four companies under the command of captains on whom they could depend. Strict subordination was exacted from the troops, not only by the order issued to the commanders forbidding them to take part in any demonstration, but also by the prohibition of military duels.

The States of Holland were equally anxious to impose

respect for their authority on the ministers of the Calvinist clergy, some of whom showed themselves disposed to encourage by their sermons the most criminal violence. They could not forgive the Grand Pensionary his opposition to the promotion of the Prince of Orange. One of them, Goethals, having met one day two of his colleagues, ventured to ask them if it would not be lawful to cut De Witt's throat, giving his own opinion, in which one of them agreed, in the affirmative. But Stermont, a pastor of the Hague, detested these sentiments, and declared that his conscience would not allow him to take part in their councils, adding that the man of blood would not live out half his days. To calm the irritation of the clergy against the Act of Exclusion, De Witt persistently put before them Cromwell's attachment to the Protestant cause ; but they were with difficulty persuaded, and it was only by the sternest injunctions of obedience to the new government that their flights of eloquence could be controlled. Still the States of Holland thought it necessary to satisfy them by making at least some concessions to their demands of religious intolerance. Having refused the expulsion of priests of the Roman Catholic religion, they consented to the passing of a law of exception which rendered Catholics incapable of exercising municipal functions, and prohibited them from making by will any gifts in favour of the ministers or establishments belonging to their religion. It was a melancholy denial of the principles of religious liberty in a country which gloried in having conquered it, but which sometimes failed to respect it.

The theological quarrels which threatened to arise again, and which would not have failed to keep up the excitement of the preachers, was another cause of anxiety for the States of Holland, and rendered their intervention necessary. Twenty-five years previously these quarrels had cost their Grand Pensionary, Olden Barneveldt, his life, when he took part against the Stadtholder Maurice of Orange in the struggle between the Arminians and the Gomarists, which was a struggle between innovation and orthodoxy. They gave occasion for the same vehemence with regard to the philosophy of Descartes, which was defended by the disciples of the pro-

fessor Cocceius and attacked by those of the theologian Voetius. In spite of the preference of the principal deputies of Holland and the Grand Pensionary De Witt for the opinions of Cocceius, the States of Holland took the part of the Voetians who were supported by the Calvinist clergy. In the hope of pacifying these differences, they undertook to conclude a treaty of division between theology and philosophy, which assigned to them 'the bounds and limits within which they must restrict themselves, without encroaching upon one another, so as to avoid all confusion and disorder.'

The States of Holland were still more interested in taking advantage of every opportunity for discouraging the pretensions of the Orange party. They held out, therefore, against all concessions, granting to the young Prince of Orange no exemption from taxation, insisting that petitions presented in his name should be drawn up on stamped paper like those of all their subjects, and refusing to designate him in official documents by the title of Highness, which they considered would perpetuate the outward signs of the stadtholdership. Not choosing to make any engagement in his favour, they also declined the offers of the States of Zealand and of the Princess Dowager of Orange, who proposed to them that they should take part in his education or his guardianship. They contented themselves with showing the respect due to his birth and to the services of his family by allowing him to inhabit the palace of his ancestors, and by giving orders for the prosecution of the authors of all libels which insulted the House of Orange.

This determined attitude overawed the other provinces. Having resigned themselves to the cessation of all contests with the States of Holland, they consented to acknowledge Beverningh as treasurer-general, without paying any attention to the persistent opposition of the deputies of Friesland, who could not forgive him the Act of Exclusion, and they yielded to the representations of the Federal State Council pointing out the prejudice which would result to the republic from the vacancy of so important a post. Holland thus obtained reparation for the ill-will that had lasted for two

years, and might consider her adversaries as finally reduced to submission.

The sudden attempt which the latter made to resume the offensive was unsuccessful and only served to show their impotence. At the beginning of the year 1657, by a preconcerted understanding between the deputies of Friesland and those of Overyssel, one of the former, Epo Boetsma, taking advantage of the weekly turn of presidency which was the right of the province of Overyssel, renewed inopportunely the proposal for the selection of a major-general, and demanded of the States-General that they should not allow themselves to be stopped by the opposition of Holland if it were still persisted in. The recent nomination of Beverningh gave him an opportunity for adducing the strongest arguments, as the choice of a commander for the army was more important to the republic than that of a treasurer-general, and a unanimous vote of the provinces could not be required for one of these posts when a majority of suffrages had been considered sufficient for the other. The opportunity seemed favourable for a vote to be carried by surprise; the Grand Pensionary was absent, the States of Holland were not assembled. The deputy of Overyssel, Mulart, who presided over the sitting of the States-General, caused it to be decided at once that the question should be settled in the sitting of the following day. After stormy and vehement debates, the majority of the provinces having given their decision, he announced in their name that the commission of major-general would be made out without delay, in order that so important an appointment should not be left any longer in suspense. The remonstrances of the councillor-deputies of Holland, who in the interval between the sittings represented the States of the Province, were vainly supported by the Grand Pensionary, who had returned hastily from Amsterdam; he only succeeded in obtaining with great difficulty an adjournment of a fortnight.

The States of Holland took advantage of this delay to resume their sittings, and the Grand Pensionary succeeded in preventing any dissension being displayed in their Assembly. Strong in their union and determined not to allow themselves

to be dictated to, they voted against the appointment of major-general, to which they had previously consented only on condition of a preliminary agreement on the Project of Harmony. Their resolution, which had been embodied in a report carefully prepared by John de Witt, was communicated to the States of the other provinces with a letter which left no further doubt as to their intentions. They concluded it by announcing that in the event of the selection of a major-general being carried out in spite of their opposition, the troops in the pay of Holland, which represented the greater part of the army, would no longer obey, at least in times of peace, any but a commander of their own, whom they reserved to themselves the right of nominating. They appeared disposed to confer their command on Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, in whom they counted on finding a general 'esteemed by military men and who would not hesitate to obey them.'

Still it was not without uneasiness that De Witt looked forward to these extremities, which would imperil the confederation of the United Provinces; he dreaded a violent collision between Holland and the other provinces, which did not appear disposed to yield. 'What I fear,' he wrote to one of his relations, his habitual confidant, Zuidpolsbroeck, 'is that the other provinces, with their appointed chief, may make themselves masters of the frontier towns situated outside this province and place Holland under the necessity of submitting. Perhaps I exaggerate; but it is my habit to consider important affairs under their most serious aspect, so that I may always be prepared and on my guard against any event which may happen.'

Under these circumstances, everything depended upon the more or less pacific course that would be taken by the Prince of Nassau. He could not show himself indifferent to his own interest. John de Witt had failed in obtaining from him a disavowal of his partisans, or in preventing his applying to the States of Holland for their consent to his nomination. But the latter were the less disposed to accede to his request, that Cromwell, whose implacable enemy he had always de-

clared himself, had once more taken alarm, on account of the clamorous attempt made on his behalf. Moreover, the few partisans whom the young Prince of Orange still preserved, instead of making common cause with him, continued to display feelings of jealousy and distrust towards him. He soon perceived, therefore, that any hasty step might be prejudicial to him, as the post of major-general would no longer be of any advantage to him if the contingent of the troops of Holland were placed under the command of a leader of their own. Fearing that the States of Holland might make choice of his rival Beverwaert, he preferred to await the opportunity of a foreign war, which would make it impossible for the military command to be left any longer vacant. He hoped that this patient moderation would leave open to him the command of the army, by securing to him, when the opportune moment should arrive, the gratitude of the party of Holland and of the Grand Pensionary. His cautious policy disconcerted the warlike dispositions of the other provinces and prevented them from carrying out their enterprise. The States of Holland were thus encouraged to persevere in their policy of resistance. At the suggestion of John de Witt, they published a manifesto intended to justify it, in which they renewed their vindication of the sovereignty of each province, even at the risk of exaggeration, and declared 'that their intention of opposing the nomination of a major-general was henceforth irrevocable.'

Provoked by the rash aggressions of the other provinces, they had renounced the wise projects for an agreement which might easily have been concluded, but their opposition was detrimental to the interests of the republic. The army, being no longer commanded, was condemned to inevitable deterioration. All military rule having ceased and been replaced by that of the civil authorities, the commands which still remained were independent of one another. Prince William Frederick of Nassau, in his capacity of Grand Master of the Artillery, Prince John Maurice of Nassau and the Rhingrave Salms, one lieutenant-general and the other commissary-general of the cavalry, had no authority over the other bodies of troops.

The infantry, which consisted of 26,000 men, had no longer any leader. Frederick Henry, the last but one of the stadtholders and captains-general, had, in his time, abolished by degrees the principal commands, in order not to have, even below him, any one to share in his authority, and he had restricted himself to a major-general. The post of major-general having become vacant, there remained only colonels to exercise the command. Beverwaert, whom the States of Holland would have been disposed to make captain-general of the troops of their province, had only, save in time of war, an honorary post in his capacity of *sergent de bataille* or chief of the staff. The principal officers whom the States-General had in their employ were Francis de l'Aubespine, Marquis de Hauterive, governor of Breda, who, 'deaf and gouty, had retired to France, where he employed himself in embellishing his house of Montrouge, although he preferred, as he said, the diversions of Breda to the splendour and magnificence of Paris;' Wenberge, 'old and infirm,' who on the death of Major-General Brederode had obtained the governorship of Bois-le-Duc; Kirkpatrick; Pugler, governor of Schenk; Starrenburg, colonel of the guards, and Percival, one of his captains, described in a contemporary report as an engineer particularly skilled in the construction of fortifications. Regiments had also been given to Dolman and Bampfield,[1] both of English origin, who had gained by their devotion the confidence of the republican party, and who kept up a military and political correspondence with John de Witt. The States were satisfied with appointing a colonel when they wanted to unite a body of troops under one command, but they then only entrusted to him a temporary authority, which could not therefore be efficient. De Witt was too far-seeing to be indifferent to this military weakness, which was disorganising the army. At his proposal, the States of Holland hastened to satisfy the objections of the Council of State, which drew attention to the appointment of youthful and inexperienced

[1] Bampfield had accompanied the Duke of York to Holland, at the commencement of the revolution in England, after having assisted him in escaping from St. James's Palace, where he was kept prisoner.

officers, the abuse of leave granted by the States of the Provinces without the knowledge of the Council of State, and the weakening of the numerical force of the regiments. The following year they employed themselves with equal solicitude in new regulations for the constitution of the army, and demanded that an end should be put to the sale of military commands by a general prohibition which they were unable to procure; but these were only palliatives, very insufficient to cure an evil which was daily increasing.

Still, the danger was too remote to arouse uneasiness. The States of Holland had no longer anything to fear for their internal security, and could enjoy at their leisure the discouragement to which their political adversaries were reduced. The vacancy in the post of major-general succeeding at an interval of three years the Act of Exclusion, deprived the Orange party of all hopes of a restoration. The dissensions of the other provinces, which were a prey to constantly renewed disturbances, made Holland the arbiter of the confederation and enabled her to exercise the powers of the ancient stadtholders. Thus she was commissioned to intervene as mediator between the two factions who were contending for the government of Overyssel. In response to their appeal, De Witt and his uncle Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, burgomaster of Amsterdam, were appointed negotiators, and procured the acceptance of a plan of pacification in accordance with which any proposal for the nomination of a stadtholder in Overyssel should be postponed till the majority of the young Prince of Orange. 'We have at last pronounced our decision,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'in the presence of those interested, in the Assembly of their Noble Mightinesses; it will be published in the name of their Noble Mightinesses, and under the name of Holland, to serve as instructions to the States of the province of Overyssel.'

Having thus acquired the peaceable enjoyment of a supremacy which was henceforth uncontested, the States of Holland turned their attention to the marks of consideration due to them, and the outward signs which might make their sovereignty in some sort visible. 'In order,' they declared,

'not to be without the titles proper to the dignity, the rank, the honour, the grandeur, and the sovereignty of the province,' they required all the foreign ministers accredited to the republic to cause their governments to adopt invariably the formula of address thus laid down: 'To the Noble, Great, and Mighty Lords, the States of Holland and West Friesland.' To enhance by outward show the splendour of their power, they made use of another hall for their sittings in the ancient palace of the Counts of Holland, which they caused to be magnificently decorated. The magistrates of Amsterdam, on their side, had taken possession of a new town hall, an imposing edifice which had taken seven years to build, had just been decorated by the greatest painters of the century, and the inauguration of which, celebrated with great solemnity, served as the subject for a commemorative medal, with this proud inscription: '*Salutem et cives servare potens.*'

John de Witt had opened to the States of Holland this road to prosperity, along which he guided them with equal firmness and forethought. Although only charged with the execution of their orders, he had contrived to gain such authority, that those whom he called 'his masters' were freely and submissively subject to his direction. It was without flattery that the ambassador Nieupoort wrote to him: 'You who are intimately acquainted with what takes place in this state can best judge what ought or ought not to be done, to which I and those with me have only to conform.' 'John de Witt,' wrote the ambassador Chanut, 'is the most important person in the whole state, through the power of Holland over the other provinces, and that which he possesses over the ten or twelve principal leaders of the governing party.'

He carefully avoided, however, all appearance of domination. When his powers as Grand Pensionary had legally expired, he surrendered them to the States of Holland, and wrote to them with the humblest deference the following letter: 'On this day five years ago you confided to me my office; I now place it in your hands, thanking you for the long patience with which you have borne with my imperfect

services. I can assure you that if I have committed faults that are inseparable from human weakness, I have never done so from premeditation, or wilfully. I hope that your kindness and favour will grant me the pardon which I ask from the Assembly in general, and from every member in particular. If I may be released from my functions I shall wish for no greater reward, as the faithful servant of my country.'

The States of Holland were too much interested in the continuance of their trust in him to forego his services, and by a unanimous vote they re-invested him in his office. Moreover, to guarantee him in anticipation the recompense which they reserved for him, they engaged to give him a seat in one of the courts of justice, whenever he should cease from his functions as Grand Pensionary. This re-election, by prolonging his powers, enabled him to enjoy the success of his own work. Since the day on which he had entered upon his office as first minister, each step that he had made along a path interrupted by obstacles had been a step in advance. Compelled, at the very outset of his ministry, to defend his party against the attempts at a restoration which, by giving the power to a child, might give cause to fear the dangers inseparable from a minority, he had found himself obliged besides to preserve the United Provinces from the dangers of a war with England, which was ruining them and which might destroy them irretrievably. He had passed happily through these trials. His home policy had now guaranteed the independence of Holland against all attacks and ensured her the federal supremacy. His foreign policy had not been less skilful or less fortunate; it had gained for the republic, once isolated and humbled, alliances, victories, and treaties.

Internal divisions following on the disasters of the war with England had weakened and discredited the States-General abroad. Their minister at the Court of France, Boreel, never ceased lamenting this in his correspondence with De Witt. 'Everyone imagines,' he wrote, 'that the state is in a position in which she may be insulted with impunity.' The Grand Pensionary was eager to reassure him, and confided to him, in

the following terms, his patriotic hopes:—'You and all the ministers at foreign courts can indeed easily judge—even better, perhaps, than we who are here—how important it is for the state to put an end to all jealousy and distrust between the members of the union. For some time past, with all my feeble power, I have worked for this with all my heart, and I expect a prompt and real success. If it should be so, the allies of this state may expect more efficient proofs of our friendship, and those who are not well affected to her will have greater cause to fear her.' Neither did he neglect any opportunity for restoring to the republic the credit which she appeared to have lost. He was more interested than anyone else in procuring satisfaction for the national pride, in order to obliterate the humiliations of the treaty which he had concluded with Cromwell.

The commerce of the United Provinces, which had been injured by the last war, was actively watched over and defended on all seas. Vice-Admiral Ruyter, having been despatched to the Mediterranean to defend their merchant shipping against the African pirates, sailed to Algiers, which he was unable to attack, but where he spread terror, overran the coasts of Morocco, seized several pirate vessels, and advanced on a second expedition as far as the coast of Tunis. He succeeded in this manner in repressing a system of piracy which had long remained unpunished, and re-established friendly relations between the native sovereigns and the republic. The kings of Morocco and Fez made choice of three envoys, who repaired to the Hague to renew the treaty formerly concluded between their masters and the United Provinces. 'M. de Witt,' who was always curious to know thoroughly all the states of the world,' writes the French ambassador, 'took pains to do them all sorts of kind offices, and caused them to be received at the expense of their High Mightinesses.'

In the colonies, also, the republic repaired with happy promptitude the blow that had been inflicted on her by the loss of Brazil. It was in the far limits of Asia that she sought for compensation, and the East India Company owed to her negotiations as well as to her conquests a prosperity hitherto

unknown. She took advantage of the revolution which had just abandoned China to the Tartar invasion to obtain free entry into that great empire, and her ambassador, who was sent back to Pekin with costly presents, was received by the emperor with expressions of satisfaction. Relations with Japan were not less favourable to the Company. In spite of the expulsion of the Portuguese, and the massacre of Christians which had stained the country with blood forty years before, it had preserved its settlements and retained a right of trading in the island of Decima, opposite Nagasaki. The Company had, it is true, only obtained the recognition of these privileges at the price of humiliating conditions and by means of pretended religious apostasy forced upon its agents. But anxious only for its pecuniary interests, it cared for nothing but trade, and secured on all merchandise of which it had the monopoly profits valued at 150 per cent.

In Europe, the United Provinces could not resign themselves to a timid and retiring attitude, and they were impatient to recover the credit they had lost. A fresh attempt against religious liberty, the rumour of which spread far, enabled them to appear on the scene again, and gave them an opportunity for assuming with ostentation the patronage of the Protestant cause. The Waldenses, cruelly persecuted by the Court of Savoy for their religious belief, were seeking protectors, and the States-General responded to their appeal with eager sympathy. They supported energetically the remonstrances in which Cromwell took the initiative, added a subscription of 200,000 florins to what had been collected in England, and despatched one of their deputies, Van Ommeren, on an embassy with orders to go first to Switzerland, in order to consult with the delegates of the cantons belonging to the reformed religion. The Court of France took alarm at this intervention of the Protestant powers, and to forestall it obtained by the treaty of Pignerol a much-needed pacification, which was not, however, intended to last long. None the less to the States-General belonged the merit of having caused the persecution to cease.

The renewal of friendly relations with the great powers

was indispensable to the United Provinces to enable them to recover their freedom of action abroad and to participate in the affairs of Europe. Spain had recognised their independence, and was now too much weakened to cause them any alarm. Their treaty with Cromwell, by which they had submitted to the political exactions of the Protector, made England once more their ally. It was only their alliance with France that was in danger, and before the Grand Pensionary's skilful diplomacy had been able to secure it, they were exposed to the danger of a rupture.

France, who feared that she might be isolated in the war which she was carrying on against the Spanish monarchy, had never ceased reproaching the States-General for their defection in concluding the peace of Münster with Spain. She found fresh cause for displeasure in their treaty with Cromwell, which she would have liked to delay, in order that she might be included in it. She had, therefore, stirred up maritime quarrels with them, by claiming a right of capture over all ships belonging to the republic which carried Spanish merchandise, in accordance with the old proverb 'that the enemy's coat forfeits that of the friend.' In vain the States-General, by demanding the renewal of their maritime treaty with France, sought to obtain the recognition of that great principle of maritime law that the flag protects the cargo, which was to be one of the tardy conquests of modern civilisation; the conferences held by the Grand Pensionary with the ambassador Chanut had been of no avail. Far from relaxing her exactions, France continued them more imperiously, when Mazarin, bridging over, after a fashion, the abyss which seemed to yawn between the oldest monarchy of Europe and a regicide republic, had obtained, by means of concessions, an alliance between Cromwell and the French Government against Spain.

In order to complete this coalition, Mazarin attempted to force the United Provinces to join it, by imposing on them a defensive and offensive alliance. Instead of giving them credit for the good-will which they displayed, he could not endure the resistance they offered to his exactions, and determined to overcome them by the most unjust severity. Not

content with withdrawing from the subjects of the United Provinces the privileges which had hitherto guaranteed them exemption from certain onerous taxes, the French Government imposed upon them a new freight duty of fifty sols, or one crown, per ton, on all foreign ships which should load or unload merchandise in the kingdom. Moreover, it declared lawful capture all vessels carrying a Spanish cargo. Under this pretext the French privateers captured, on all seas, more than 328 ships belonging to the mercantile navy of the United Provinces, representing a value of twenty or thirty millions. 'No justice can be obtained here,' writes Boreel, the ambassador of the States-General, from Paris, 'and if we ever do obtain it the sentences are not carried out. Where the United Provinces are concerned, the most obvious crimes are winked at and the plainest reasons are not listened to. Why should this be, except to force us to do what is wished here—in order to engage us in a war with Spain? The Dutch consul at Marseilles has actually been attacked by armed men and left for dead on the spot, because he had delivered to the king's commissioners several sentences favourable to the subjects of the republic.'

The States-General, unable to endure such arbitrary measures, resolved to repel force by force. Ruyter, in the execution of their orders, surprised and seized two ships, which had just before plundered some Dutch vessels, and sent them with their crews under an escort to Amsterdam. Without waiting or admitting any explanation, the French government retaliated by confiscating all ships and merchandise belonging to the subjects of the republic in the French ports.

The United Provinces would not allow themselves to be intimidated. A policy of reprisals was eagerly advised by the States of Holland. 'I think,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'that it would be well to adopt the resolution of giving directions to the vice-admiral to attack French vessels, both merchantmen and line-of-battle ships, to take possession of them, and to continue to act thus resolutely till the embargo has been taken off by order of the King of France.' The States-General, more cautious, but equally determined to

obtain justice, contented themselves with ordering that forty-eight vessels should be fitted out. At the same time their ambassador, Boreel, forestalling their instructions, waited on the young king, to whom he represented, with lofty pride, the iniquity of the orders which had been issued. 'No ambassador ever spoke so freely at this court,' said Mazarin to him, 'and you may have to repent of it.' Boreel was obliged to be satisfied, as sole answer, with the declaration that the remonstrances of the States should be transmitted to the French ambassador, who had just started for the Hague.

The negotiator selected by Mazarin was Auguste de Thou, a member of one of the great parliamentary families of the kingdom, whose father had distinguished himself as a statesman and historian, and whose brother, François de Thou, had been one of the victims of the implacable policy of Richelieu. Assisted by Gentillot, a lieutenant-colonel in the service of the United Provinces, whom Mazarin employed as one of his agents, he undertook to gain the confidence of the States by appearing disposed to conciliate, although his instructions forbade him 'to make the first advances.' 'These people,' he wrote, 'are not to be either scolded or hurried, but must be treated gently and leisurely.' Having been received in solemn audience on April 28, 1657, De Thou warmly urged the States-General to disavow and make reparation for the conduct of Ruyter. But they persisted in their refusal to give up the two captured French vessels, so long as their own ships had not been given up to them. The French Government having refused to grant them this preliminary satisfaction, the severe measures proposed by the States of Holland appeared to be justified; they prohibited the entry of French merchandise into the United Provinces, issued orders for blockading all the ports of the kingdom, and concluded by declaring that all French vessels met with on the seas by their fleets should be lawful capture.

France had not at her disposal the necessary naval forces to allow her to brave with impunity such a danger as this, and, in order to avert it, De Thou showed himself disposed to give the States-General pledges of satisfaction, which he

undertook to have ratified. The terms of agreement were debated and agreed to, thanks to the earnest intervention of the Grand Pensionary, of Beverningh, and of their mutual friend De Groot, who thus brought about the happy termination of a painfully prolonged negotiation. The States-General insisted on a promise of the removal of the embargo placed on their ships and merchandise, the execution of the judicial decrees pronounced in favour of their subjects, the speedy conclusion of a maritime treaty, and, meanwhile, the provisional enjoyment of all privileges accorded to the inhabitants of the most favoured states. In consideration of these engagements signed by De Thou, the States-General consented without further delay to the satisfaction demanded of them. It was the triumph of a policy equally removed from weakness and rashness, decided in its pretensions, which it never exceeded, warlike from necessity, but peaceable from inclination. 'We only desire to guarantee due respect for the state, and the tranquillity of its subjects trafficking on the seas,' wrote De Witt to Nieupoort, 'and it appears to us that we have now attained our ends.'

The ill-will of Mazarin delayed, it is true, the ratification of this agreement, in spite of the remonstrances of De Thou, who never ceased to represent that these subterfuges were weakening and destroying the credit of France. Not choosing to be the dupes of their own confidence, the States-General fixed a period of ten days, after which the resolution which they had taken to exercise reprisals would be irrevocably carried out. Mazarin, obliged to take notice of the complaints of the shopkeepers of Paris, who carried on with the republic a trade valued at 20,000,000 florins, was forced to yield. A letter from the king, 'calculated to satisfy the most difficult,' was solemnly delivered to the States-General by De Thou, and gave them entire satisfaction.

An unforeseen incident, however, nearly furnished France with a grievance which might have prevented the conclusion of the negotiations. It was one of those quarrels about precedence, in regard to which the representatives of the King of France were ordered 'to go to any extremity sooner

than yield.' The ambassador, De Thou, returning from visiting the Princess Dowager in her new country house, on August 11, 1657, had met the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, at six o'clock in the evening, on the public promenade of the Hague, the Voorhout. Their coaches, that of the French ambassador drawn by six horses, and that of Gamarra by two, having met in the carriage road, had disputed the place of honour, without either choosing to turn one step out of his way. Their servants were on the point of coming to blows, and the people, attracted by the noise of the quarrel, and irritated by the outrages committed in France against the subjects of the republic, were preparing to take part for the Spanish ambassador. De Witt and some of the members of the States, informed of the tumult, hastened to interpose, summoned the guards on duty to disperse the crowd, and undertook to settle the dispute amicably. After parleys prolonged for three hours, Beverningh proposed an expedient which was agreed to; the barrier which enclosed the carriage road, and along which the coaches were stationed, was taken down; the Spanish ambassador passed on the right of the French ambassador, thus appearing to obtain the advantage; while De Thou, satisfied with having obliged Gamarra to make way for him, attributed to himself the honours of precedence.

The pacification of the quarrel entered upon with France left the United Provinces still exposed to the exactions of the French Government so long as the latter stood in need of their assistance against Spain. The continuation of the war between the two rival monarchies gave them reason to fear that the Low Countries might be conquered by France, and that this conquest might give them a formidable neighbour. The peace of the Pyrenees, concluded soon after, in 1659, reassured the States-General. It enabled them to enjoy the benefits of a neutrality which they had not chosen to depart from, and which was now no longer threatened. Their alliance with France, which had been till now in danger, was thus secured.

They had been obliged meanwhile to observe a policy of great circumspection in order to remain the allies of England.

Their ambassador, Nieupoort, had contrived to win the confidence of the Protector by the cheerfulness of his disposition and the charms of his conversation. Cromwell sent for him without ceremony, liked to spend in his company the hours which he devoted to relaxation from business, invited him to hunt with him, and even to play at bowls with him in the park of Hampton Court. 'As I was not acquainted with that game,' wrote Nieupoort to De Witt, 'he made me bet with him. After continuing this exercise for two hours, he invited me to sit down with him, while the other gentlemen remained standing, and had me reconducted to my carriage by the secretary of state, Thurloe.' Nieupoort did not fail to respond to these advances by courtier-like attentions. Cromwell having given him to understand one day that he wished to purchase his handsome barb, Nieupoort left it intentionally in the stables at Hampton Court, and refused to take it back.

This interchange of courtesies was all the more necessary as great difficulties might be anticipated at the Hague in carrying on diplomatic relations with the English envoy, George Downing, in whom the States-General could not put any confidence. Having started in life as tutor to some young English gentlemen, Downing, appointed chaplain of a regiment in the army of the republic, had brought himself under the notice of Cromwell. Pleased with his readiness and aptness for intrigue, the Protector had commissioned him to superintend the work of his spies and secret correspondents. Allied by marriage to the House of Howard, one of the most illustrious in England, Downing soon obtained for himself an entry into diplomacy, and was sent as minister to the States-General. Immediately on his arrival at his post, he commenced a policy of chicanery and disputes from which he never afterwards departed. 'Trusting only,' according to the testimony of a contemporary who had known him well, 'to the knavish tricks on which he even prided himself, and from which he did not derive much advantage, he had not sufficient honesty or prudence to believe that there is no minister who deceives more surely and more agreeably than he who never deceives at all.

The States were obliged, therefore, to be on their guard in order to avoid any cause for a misunderstanding between the two governments, and to furnish no pretext for recrimination. Thus Holland, having purchased peace with England at the price of the Act of Exclusion of the young Prince of Orange, in his capacity as nephew of the last King of England, showed herself eager not to tolerate any conspiracy on the part of the sons of Charles I., and, to reassure the Protector, excluded them from her territories. In return for this compliance, Cromwell, though he would not accede to the conclusion of the treaty of commerce which the States-General never ceased to demand, showed a conciliatory spirit towards them by renouncing the right of search which he claimed to exercise over their vessels, to prevent them from carrying on any trade in Spanish merchandise. The States-General feared none the less that the violent measures of which the Court of France had set the example might deter the Protector from the policy of moderation which he had adopted; but they were reassured by their ambassador. 'As regards the apprehensions which I expressed to the secretary of state, Thurloe, with respect to the conduct of his government,' wrote Nieupoort to De Witt, 'he assured me that the intentions which appeared to be suspected at the Hague were in nobody's mind here, and never would be; adding that we must have confidence in one another.' Cromwell, whose mind was filled with the idea of having himself proclaimed king, and of founding a dynasty, was not disposed to stir up conflicts abroad. The war with Spain, which he renewed with fresh activity when forced to abandon his ambitious projects, and which put him in possession of Dunkirk, might, it was true, have exposed the United Provinces to fresh disputes on the subject of their neutrality. But they were spared these by his death, which followed closely upon his new conquest. The events to which it gave rise, and which soon deprived his son of power, to place it in the hands of other chiefs of the republican party who were equally unable to retain it, could not fail to be favourable to the United Provinces, by rendering it impossible for England to make any pretensions to supremacy abroad. 'We have,' wrote De Witt,

'nothing to fear from the present Parliament, which is more likely to stand in need of us in order to avoid shipwreck.' The slow dissolution of an expiring republic gave the States-General the most perfect security, and even appeared to put their old rival at their mercy.

Freed henceforth from all anxiety with regard to France and England, they took advantage of the opportunity to carry on the war with Portugal, and to secure their interests in the North by an armed intervention. Unable to obtain from Portugal the restitution of their important colony of Brazil, which had been taken from them while they were occupied in defending themselves against England, and further provoked by the seizure of their trading vessels, they determined to obtain justice by force. A fleet commanded by Ruyter proceeded to blockade Lisbon, and obliged the Portuguese Government to make proposals of peace, which were not accepted. The States-General purposely delayed the conclusion of negotiations in order to continue the war in the Indies; the Portuguese, driven out successively from the island of Ceylon and the island of Celebes or Macassar, lost their last colonies. These conquests were of advantage to the East India Company, and made up to the United Provinces for the loss of Brazil.

Events which had happened in the North imposed still more forcibly upon the States-General the necessity for intervention in order to preserve intact their maritime power. They thus secured to themselves a proudly acquired supremacy over Brandenburg, Denmark, and Sweden.

Sweden threatened them with a dangerous rivalry by seeking to resume the position which the Thirty Years' War had conferred upon her. The sudden abdication of Queen Christina had caused her rights to pass into the hands of her cousin Charles Gustavus, an ambitious and enterprising prince, who, finding on his accession to the throne that the royal treasury was exhausted, was impatient to acquire fresh resources by means of conquest. Having at his disposal a well-seasoned army, commanded by one of the great soldiers of the day, Marshal Wrangel, he considered himself bound to

continue the work of his uncle, Gustavus Adolphus, and wished to secure for himself the dominion over the Baltic Sea, of which he proposed to make a sort of Swedish lake.

Such an enterprise, if it had been successful, would have instantly destroyed the sources of the maritime prosperity of the United Provinces. It was the Baltic Sea that furnished them with their provisions of wheat, and with the necessary materials both for the construction and the maintenance of their ships; their mercantile navy employed more than five hundred vessels in this traffic. When the King of Sweden, therefore, having made a sudden invasion into the states of Casimir Vasa, king of Poland, took possession of his kingdom 'without spending more time about it than would have been required to travel through it in regular stages,' this invasion spread alarm in the United Provinces. It justified the fears of the Grand Pensionary, who wrote to one of the ambassadors of the republic: 'To see the King of Sweden master of the horizon would be one of the greatest of dangers for this state.' The treaty concluded between the United Provinces and Sweden some years before prevented them from interposing to hinder such a formidable extension of power. They therefore accepted with eagerness the unexpected offers of alliance made them by the Elector of Brandenburg, who feared that the King of Sweden's conquests might soon put himself at his mercy.

Frederick William, who, by his persistence in a policy which always remained superior to bad fortune, became in some sort the second founder of his dynasty, and merited the appellation of the Great Elector, had succeeded fifteen years before to an impoverished heritage. Deprived by Sweden of Pomerania, he was not even the independent possessor of the Duchy of Prussia, which was only a fief of Poland. Brought up in Holland, he had married the eldest daughter of the Princess Dowager, Louisa Henrietta, sister of the last Stadtholder, William II., whose name is still held in honour on account of her piety, and in whom he found, as he said himself, the most unfailing of his advisers. This relationship had made him rather hostile than favourable to the United

Provinces, since the change of government which had deprived his nephew, the Prince of Orange, of all power. This ill-will towards them was encouraged, moreover, by his envoy to the Hague, Weyman, 'an obstinate and violent man, who had begun life as a village lawyer, and had thus acquired a taste for chicanery.' The fear of Swedish domination, however, overpowered the prejudices he entertained against the party which governed the republic. By the treaty of the Hague, concluded with the United Provinces, he undertook to assist the kingdom of Poland, in consideration of the promises made to him and of the subsidies, amounting to 40,000 crowns, which he received on account. This alliance ended only in a speedy defection. Alarmed by the rapid conquest of Poland, and disconcerted by the entry of a Swedish army into his dominions, he hastened to offer submission to the King of Sweden, at the risk of being accused by the States-General 'of an act of treason which the Grand Pensionary De Witt attributed to his *vulpine* conduct,' thus reproaching him with wishing to act the fox's part. By the treaty of Königsberg he made common cause with Charles Gustavus, and five months later, by the treaty of Marienburg, he united his troops to the Swedish army, in order to complete the overthrow of the King of Poland.

The last bulwark of resistance was the town of Dantzic, the granary of plenty of the United Provinces, to which it furnished 70,000 measures of wheat. The States-General could not allow it to fall without imperilling the interests of the republic, and, while resorting to diplomatic negotiations, they soon perceived that, if they wished to save it, they must rely on themselves alone. Although the Grand Pensionary was averse from war out of respect for treaties, he nevertheless supported an energetic policy. A military demonstration proposed by the States of Holland was agreed to by the States-General; they despatched, under command of Lieutenant-Admiral Obdam, a fleet of forty-eight ships, which landed at Dantzic 1,300 foot soldiers, the command of whom was entrusted to Percival, one of the captains of the regiment of guards. Intimidated by the assistance thus ren-

dered to the besieged town, Charles Gustavus, who feared a rising in Poland, appeared disposed to negotiate articles of a treaty which were settled without difficulty in the Conference of Elbing. The States-General renewed, under conditions advantageous to their commerce, their former alliance with Sweden, and the town of Dantzic retained her liberty of remaining loyal to the King of Poland, while undertaking not to furnish him with any assistance. The free navigation of the Baltic Sea was thus ensured to the United Provinces.

The rashness of the King of Denmark exposed them to still more serious dangers. Frederick III. only awaited a favourable opportunity to recover from the Swedes the latest conquests they had made in his kingdom. The renewal of hostilities by the King of Poland against Charles Gustavus gave him the signal for which he was impatiently waiting. Not only did Casimir Vasa recover his kingdom from the King of Sweden as rapidly as the latter had conquered it, but he also deprived him of the alliance of the Elector of Brandenburg, whom he secured on his side by acknowledging him as sovereign of the Duchy of Prussia. This sudden change in the fortunes of the King of Sweden emboldened the King of Denmark, who, without considering the inferiority of his forces, declared war against his ambitious neighbour. But his invasion of the Duchy of Bremen was followed by a prompt retreat, and he soon found himself threatened in his own dominions, without the power of defending himself. In vain had the States-General addressed to him the most earnest remonstrances, to dissuade him from such imprudent conduct, of which the Grand Pensionary pointed out to him all the dangers. In vain they then advised him to accept offers of peace that would secure to him the integrity of his kingdom. Frederick III. was so imprudent as to try to gain time, hoping to drag the States-General into a precipitate rupture, from which they were saved by the prudence of the Grand Pensionary. His hesitation only profited the King of Sweden, who, breaking off negotiations, completed in a campaign of a few days the subjection of Denmark, and approached Copenhagen at the head of an army of 15,000 men. Yielding now to the

councils of despair, Frederick III. submitted to all the conditions that were imposed upon him by the victor, and ceded to him the greater part of his dominions, by signing with him the treaty of Roskild. To preserve the rights of toll in the Sound he was obliged to promise to prohibit all foreign fleets from entering the Baltic Sea. 'I have seen in the port of Amsterdam the wooden keys that will open it,' said the ambassador of the States, Van Beuningen, haughtily, to the King of Sweden, alluding to the ships of the republic, which did not allow the passage to be closed to them for long.

Although the United Provinces did not lose less than Denmark by this convention, the States-General would not perhaps have ventured to give the signal for a fresh war from which De Witt was trying to dissuade them had not the King of Sweden, making himself the aggressor, offered them the opportunity for which they were waiting to recover their liberty of action. Impatient to attempt a sudden stroke that might put into his power the last remnants of the Danish monarchy, Charles Gustavus complained that the treaty of Roskild had not been executed, and declared it broken off. All resistance gave way once more before his impetuous onset. Having obtained possession of all the strongholds of the kingdom, he proceeded to lay siege to Copenhagen, intending to raze it to the ground, Frederick III. having shut himself up there with his wife, the courageous Queen Sophia Amelia, to encourage the inhabitants to resistance. All hope for Denmark was at an end if she were not promptly rescued. The ambassador of the republic, Van Beuningen, therefore, after valiantly exposing himself in the besieged town, embarked in haste, to implore speedy assistance.

Immediately on his arrival, the States of Holland responded to the pressing appeal of the Grand Pensionary, whose pacific scruples were overcome by the necessity for war. They repaired in a body to the Assembly of the States-General, to whom they represented the imminence of the danger and demanded that the violation of the treaty should not be left unpunished. It was immediately determined to fit out a powerful fleet. To cover the expense the States of

Holland had recourse to a loan and increased their debt by 2,600,000 florins. Six weeks later Admiral Obdam de Wassenaar set sail for Copenhagen, having under his orders thirty-five ships carrying thirty-eight regiments. He was furnished with written instructions enjoining him not only to assist the King of Denmark but also to destroy the Swedish fleet.

A naval engagement soon followed. Forty-five Swedish vessels were in line; they had been placed under the command of Wrangel, major-general and admiral-in-chief, who appeared destined to sustain his military renown on sea as well as on land. The King of Sweden, hoping to escape from the necessity of fighting by not allowing his fleet to take the offensive, had not despatched it against that of the States, with whom it might have disputed the passage of the Sound; but it was overtaken at the entrance of the Baltic Sea and could not avoid the attack. The Swedish admiral's ship was assailed in turn by the Dutch Vice-Admiral de With, who commanded the van, and by Admiral Obdam, who succeeded in disabling it, but who, kept at a distance by a fire-ship, could not obtain possession of it. The struggle was a desperate one between Vice-Admirals de With and Bielkœnstiern. After valiantly defending his ship, which had run aground, the Dutch vice-admiral, mortally wounded by a cannon-shot, refused to surrender and went down with his ship. The second vice-admiral, Floriszoon, shared his fate, and met with an equally glorious death. Obdam, unable any longer to hope for assistance from his lieutenants and surrounded by seven of the enemy's ships, sustained their fire for four hours, succeeded in getting away and rallied the fleet around him for a fresh battle. Admiral Wrangel, who had lost eight ships, could not bar his passage and reduced to seek refuge in the harbour of Landskroon left him in possession of the sea. Copenhagen was saved. Two thousand men were disembarked there under the command of Colonel Pugler. The King of Sweden was obliged to give up the idea of storming the town, but could not make up his mind to retreat, and contented himself with a siege in form, which he

tried unsucessfully to terminate during the course of the winter by a surprise, which was easily repulsed.

Diplomacy nearly deprived the States-General of the advantages of their victory. England and France, who showed jealousy of them, were secretly disposed to intervene on behalf of the King of Sweden, and were negotiating a convention which should put an end to the war in the North. The Grand Pensionary skilfully took the initiative in proposing to them a mediation and succeeded in getting it accepted, on condition that the States-General should unite with the two mediating powers against whichever of the two kings refused to make peace. Negotiations were prolonged for more than two months and ended in the convention of the Hague. The States-General insisted on the modification of the clauses prejudicial to them in the last treaty concluded between the King of Sweden and the King of Denmark; they succeeded in obtaining the opening of the passage of the Sound to foreign ships of war, thus putting an end to a prohibition which constituted a threat and a danger to the United Provinces.

In spite of the intervention of the mediators, Frederick III. and Charles Gustavus showed themselves little disposed to accept proposals of peace. The King of Denmark refused to leave to the King of Sweden his conquests and was indignant at the States wishing to force him to sign a treaty which he considered ignominious. 'Make peace, sire, if you do not wish to be made to do it,' said the envoy of the United Provinces, Vogelsangh, one day in a threatening tone. 'Who will make me?' answered the king; 'neither the States-General nor the devil himself can force me. If I must perish, I will perish as a man of honour and courage; but in falling I shall drag your masters with me over the precipice.' This obstinacy was the source of unceasing perplexity to De Witt, and caused him to fear lest the refusal of mediation might oblige the States-General to intervene against their ally. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Parliament, which felt itself threatened with a speedy restoration and was allowing the foreign policy of England to drift, he succeeded in getting the Convention of the Hague completed, by a clause

favourable to the King of Denmark, which restored to him, besides the bailiwick of Drontheim, a part of Norway. Frederick III., satisfied with this concession, promised to accept the treaty of peace which was offered to him. But his consent was followed by the refusal of the King of Sweden, who declined to lay down his arms, in the hope that the King of Denmark might incur the responsibility of the rupture of negotiations. Disappointed in this expectation, Charles Gustavus took advantage of the alteration which had been made in the Convention of the Hague to declare that he considered it as a violation of the engagements made with him, which might justify him in breaking off negotiations. He gave vent loudly to his anger before the plenipotentiaries of England and of the States-General, whom he received in his tent with every show of military power. Having refused to take cognisance of the project of mediation accepted by the King of Denmark, he addressed them sharply, and, laying his hand on his sword, concluded the interview with these haughty words: 'You, gentlemen, make treaties on your fleets; I make resolutions with my sword. Withdraw your ships out of reach of my forts if you do not wish me to drive them away with cannon-shot.'

The mediating powers could no longer remain neutral, the final period of delay fixed for mediation having expired. The retreat of the English squadron, which had been taken back to England by Admiral Montagu, who was desirous of taking part in the approaching restoration, left entire freedom of action to the fleet of the States-General. De Witt had made up his mind to the great blow to be struck, and writing to Vogelsangh, he quotes this fine sentence from the poet, which he is entitled to claim as his rule of conduct:

> . . . . . Hic murus aheneus esto
> Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.[1]

Orders to resume hostilities were given to Ruyter, who had succeeded Obdam in the command of the fleet. To con-

[1] 'Let it be your rampart of steel, to have no reproach to make to yourself, and no fault to blush for.'

form to the instructions which he had received, he transported his troops and those of the Danes to the island of Fionia and landed them at Odensee, under the enemy's fire. The Danish cavalry at first fell back and threw confusion into the ranks of the infantry. But a French captain, Henri de Culant, lord of Buat, employed in the service of the republic, who commanded the Dutch regiment of guards, threw himself into the water up to his waist, sword in hand, shouting: 'I go first, follow me!' His example carried away the troops, who drove back the Swedish cavalry and forced them to abandon the shore. The allied army, joined by reinforcements sent by the King of Denmark and the Elector of Brandenburg, took advantage of this first success to march without delay on Nyburg, where the Swedish troops were entrenched. The infantry of the States-General, amounting to 3,000 men, commanded by Colonels Killigrew and Meteren, made, pike in hand, an irresistible charge, which put the garrison to flight, and forced it to retreat in disorder into the town. Ruyter's ships bringing their broadsides to bear, thundered upon it with their guns, and obliged it to surrender at discretion, with the eleven regiments which were shut up in it. A hundred guns and a hundred and ten flags or standards remained in the hands of the conquerors.

Charles Gustavus, who had kept away from his main army in order to continue the siege of Copenhagen, was overwhelmed by the weight of this disaster, and only survived it a few months. His death in 1660, which left the succession to a king only five years of age, and made the Senate masters of the government, exposed Sweden to the difficulties of a minority. The ministers of his son Charles II. saw now the necessity for consenting without further delay to the conditions of mediation, and completed the pacification of the North by the treaty of Oliva, concluded with the King of Poland. They were grateful to the States for not yielding to the eager solicitations of the King of Denmark, who was impatient to recommence the war under more favourable conditions. Besides, they did not wish to compromise the safety of the Swedish fleet, blockaded in the port of Landskroon by Ruyter's

squadron, and for which the French ambassador, the Chevalier Terlon, had been vainly demanding free exit. When this was granted, peace between Denmark and Sweden was finally concluded at Copenhagen, under the guarantee of the mediating powers.

Denmark left to Sweden almost all her conquests, but regained, in addition to the part of Norway which she had lost, the castle of Cronenburg, which gave her back the key to the passage of the Sound, of which the revenues were also restored to her, on consideration of the payment of 35,000 crowns per annum. The treaty of Elbing, which at the very commencement of the warlike enterprises of Charles Gustavus had been intended to guarantee the interests of the United Provinces, received at length the ratification which had hitherto been delayed. The explanatory clauses, called clauses of elucidation, which made it still more advantageous for the republic, were inserted without any reservation.

The States-General were thus reaping the recompense of a policy at once bold and temperate. They prevented Sweden from establishing in the North a preponderance which would have been fatal to them. They obliged her to leave open the entrance to the Baltic Sea, of which they remained the masters, no other navy being capable of disputing their supremacy. The superiority of their fleet, the valour of their land forces, the skill and firmness of their diplomacy, had caused the credit of their government to be acknowledged. Weakened and humiliated in their last war with England, they had resumed their rank amongst the great powers. De Witt declared, according to a contemporaneous account, that during the war in the North 'he had always kept before his eyes, like two beacons, the honour and reputation of the States, as well as the interests and security of its commerce.' He might with good reason boast of having followed them, without deviating from his path. These two beacons had shown him the port, and they had successfully guided him in entering it.

CHAPTER V.

A REPUBLIC IN ITS RELATION TO TWO MONARCHIES—SUPREMACY OF HOLLAND—JOHN DE WITT RE-ELECTED GRAND PENSIONARY.

1660–1663.

Restoration of Charles II.—Honours paid to him at the Hague—Fresh demands of the Orange party—Early education of the Prince of Orange—Negotiations between De Witt and the Princess of Orange—The States of Holland take upon them the guardianship of her son—Revocation of the Act of Exclusion—Death of the Princess Royal—Conflicts of authority between the States and the other guardians of the Prince of Orange—The States resign the guardianship—Embassy of Beverwaert to London and of Downing to the Hague—Treaty between the United Provinces and England—Concessions made to Charles II.—Peace concluded with Portugal—Extradition of Charles I.'s judges—Negotiations with France—Embassy of Van Beuningen to Paris—Hostile dispositions of the ministers of Louis XIV.—Disputes to be settled—Treaty of alliance and commerce—Claims of Louis XIV. to the Low Countries—The Grand Pensionary seeks for the basis of an agreement—Embassy of Count d'Estrades to the Hague—His relations with De Witt—Offers of an understanding evaded by Louis XIV.—Promise of a preliminary agreement—Internal pacification—Agreement with Zealand—Securities taken against the Orange party—Dispute between the Count d'Estrades and the Prince of Orange—Alteration in the public prayers—Supremacy of the republican party—Re-election of the Grand Pensionary—His new functions—His family relations—His children—His works—His share in Delacourt's book, 'The Interest of Holland'—The manifesto of his policy.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland had re-opened to the United Provinces an era of prosperity which they seemed likely henceforward to be able to enjoy at their ease. He was about to complete his work of recuperation by making the republic the ally of two great monarchies, without the necessity of purchasing those alliances by a change of government. The more difficult it might appear to obtain these diplomatic successes, the more they would redound to his honour.

The restoration of Charles II., whom England, weary of

anarchy, had recalled to the throne, made a rupture more likely than a treaty. The States of Holland were in danger of finding in him an irreconcilable enemy, who would never forgive them their alliance with Cromwell, his father's murderer, nor their hostility towards his nephew, the Prince of Orange. They anticipated, moreover, that he would inevitably demand the restoration of the stadtholdership in favour of the Prince of Orange.

The position was one of peril, and John de Witt set all his political ingenuity at work to avert its dangers. Determined to maintain the republican form of government as a trust confided to him, and not to sacrifice it to royal antipathies, he was all the more anxious to keep up friendly relations with England, under the reign of Charles II. as well as under the protectorate of Cromwell. He was convinced, as those about him said, 'that if the devil himself were sovereign of Great Britain, it would be necessary to live on friendly terms with him.'

On the first intelligence of the events which were preparing, Charles II. had hastily quitted Brussels, fearing that the governor of the Low Countries might detain him there, in order to demand from him the restoration of the conquests made by Cromwell in Spain. It was at Breda, on territory belonging to the States-General, that he received the declaration of Parliament restoring to him his kingdom and inviting him to come and take possession of it.

It was of importance to the States-General and the States of Holland that they should not allow themselves to be forestalled. On the very day on which the Parliament recalled Charles II. to England, the States-General had sent some of their deputies to him, to thank him solemnly for having arrested his steps on the territory of the United Provinces. At the same time the States of Holland, anxious to make him forget that they had formerly prohibited him from entering their province, in order to please Cromwell, invited him to repair to the Hague, where they were desirous of having the honour of receiving him.

Some days later, Charles II. made his solemn entry into

that town with the princes his brothers, the Princess Royal, and the young Prince of Orange. He was accompanied by the commissioners who had gone to meet him, followed by a train of seventy-two carriages, and escorted by 500 English gentlemen on horseback; the municipal troops, and the regiment of guards formed a double line as far as the house of Prince Maurice of Nassau, which had been prepared for his reception. The following day the States-General and the States of Holland came to offer him their congratulations, and the Grand Pensionary harangued in French the royal guest of the republic; he skilfully referred in his speech to the fidelity of the United Provinces to their alliance with England, in order thus to justify their conduct towards Cromwell. 'We consider it,' he added, 'in the highest degree an interest of state; we must even admit that for some years past that interest of state has done violence to our natural inclinations, since it was not in your august person that we found the representative of that country, and thus your Majesty may judge with what affection and zeal we shall in future cherish and maintain union and close correspondence between your kingdom and this republic; since, now that we see your Majesty restored, our natural inclination and the interests of the State are united.' The answer of Charles II. was at first somewhat curt, but the compliments paid him in thanking him for his courtesy induced him to throw aside his reserve. 'I am determined,' he said, 'to enter into a very close alliance with this State, and that is why, gentlemen, I should be jealous if you chose to prefer the friendship and alliance of any other prince to mine.' 'That alliance,' answered De Witt, 'ought to be as close as possible, and the principal one of both States.' To leave no doubt as to his opinions, Charles concluded as follows the conversation, every word of which has been faithfully reported in the secret proceedings of the States of Holland: 'I take into consideration that you were forced to treat with people who, having revolted against my father, were equally persistent against me; but now you will have to do with men of honour.' Those whom he proclaimed men of honour were the same

who, later, were, by their duplicity, to cause the republic to regret the intractable rudeness of the Protector.

Banquets succeeded to visits and deputations. Independently of two solemn feasts offered to Charles II. by the States of Holland, the expenses of his table were magnificently defrayed. Five deputies were his guests every day, 'whereby,' says a contemporary sarcastically, 'they did themselves quite as much honour and pleasure as they did the king.' Charles could not be indifferent to the sumptuous reception that was given him, nor to the marks of respect which he received. He was, moreover, anxious to secure for the young Prince of Orange the good-will of the States-General and of the States of Holland. With this object in view, he determined, after having contrived to hold several interviews with the Grand Pensionary, to attend their Assemblies in person.

In the week following his arrival at the Hague, commissioners delegated by each province came to fetch him from the house of Prince Maurice of Nassau and conducted him to the largest hall in the palace, where the members of the States-General were met together to receive him. The president for the week, Jacob de Veth, deputy of Zealand, ceded to him his place, and Charles stood bareheaded under the royal canopy which had been prepared in the Assembly where the representatives of a republic held their sittings. He renewed to the deputies his protestations of attachment. 'I love the United Provinces,' he declared, 'more than do all the other kings put together.' The deputies of Holland, who had come to meet him on his departure from the sitting of the States-General, then accompanied him to the hall of their Assembly, to receive, in their turn, his visit. He thanked them for their hospitality, assured them of his friendship and recommended to them the interests of his family. To give more weight to this recommendation, he delivered to the Grand Pensionary a declaration signed by himself and conceived in these terms: 'Gentlemen, since I leave here in your hands the princess my sister, and the Prince of Orange my nephew, two persons who are extremely dear to me, I beg you will take their interests to heart and let them experience the

effects of your kindness, on all occasions on which the princess my sister shall request it of you, assuring you that every effect of your good-will towards them shall be recognised by me, as if I had received it in my own person.'

De Witt, who would have liked to avoid making any engagement in favour of the Prince of Orange, was embarrassed by this pressing request, and betrayed his perplexity by the ill-concealed exaggeration of his flattery. 'As we do not deserve the honour of this illustrious and splendid visit,' he said, 'we could not hope that your Majesty would have condescended to stoop so low; but since your Majesty is pleased to assure us afresh of the honour of your friendship, we venture to hope, sire, that your Majesty will have read on our countenances, as well as on those of our subjects, the true joy and public rejoicing which we feel at your happy restoration; and, indeed, we should have wished to give still greater proof of it, being constrained to admit that its effects have not been in proportion with the royal and august dignity of your Majesty.' By the help of these protestations, De Witt avoided committing himself too far, being honestly anxious not to promise what he could not fulfil. 'Your Majesty,' he added, 'recommends to us the interests of the Princess Royal and of the Prince of Orange her son; we can assure you that we shall not fail to carry out your wishes. The mere consideration that they have the honour to be so closely connected with your Majesty would suffice to incline us to this; but we may add that we were already moved by several other reasons, amongst them the affection which the princess has always displayed for the special good of our province, and with regard to the Prince of Orange, by the recollection which we cherish of the merits of his ancestors.' The following day, the States of Holland came to bid farewell to their guest. The Grand Pensionary, in his address, still further surpassed in his adulation the marks of respectful deference which Charles II. had already received, without, however, making any fresh engagements in favour of the Prince of Orange.

In order to pay Charles royal honours up to the moment of his departure, the States of Holland, joined by the deputies of the States-General, solemnly escorted him to the harbour of Schevening. He bowed his thanks to the Assembly, pressed De Witt's hand, and was conducted in a barge dressed with flags to the admiral's ship, where Lord Montague immediately hoisted the royal standard. His sister and his nephew joined him there: he only took leave of them towards evening, when he sent an escort with them back to the shore, while the fleet set all sail for England. 'The whole population,' said the 'Dutch Mercury,' 'seemed to have met by appointment to witness the departure of a king who had been seen, some months before, walking in the streets of the towns, without attracting the least attention from the passers-by.'

This brief reception had cost the United Provinces nearly half a million of florins, and the States of Holland had contributed towards it more than 350,000. 'It had procured for them,' observes a contemporary ironically, 'treasures of promises, of which Charles II. was never niggardly,' and in which the States-General, 'who were not familiar with princes,' had full confidence. With more penetration, a deputy of Holland, Nicholas Stellingwerf, one of those whom the Stadtholder William II. had caused to be imprisoned at Loevenstein with the father of John de Witt, remarked 'that it would have been better to employ the money which had been spent in feasts and banquets in the purchase of cannon, cannon balls, and munitions of war.' This sombre prevision did not prevent the States of Holland from following, with regard to the King of England, a persevering policy of friendliness and concessions. Obedient to the advice of John de Witt, they proved to him their desire for conciliation by their care for the interests of his nephew.

The restoration of Charles II. was an unexpected turn of fortune for the House of Orange, and could not fail to induce hopes that the end of its trials was at hand. Its interests had hitherto been constantly endangered by the hostility which had always subsisted between the grandmother and the mother of the young prince. Their rivalry had shortly before

given Louis XIV. a pretext for occupying the principality of Orange, the government of which was contended for by the two princesses. The King of France seized the opportunity to intervene as a mediator, and obtained possession of the town from its governor, Count Frederick Dohna, nephew of the Princess Dowager, only undertaking to restore it when the Prince of Orange should have attained his majority. The education of the young prince had not, however, suffered from the misunderstanding between the two princesses. Not wishing him to be a spectator of their disagreements, they had agreed together to take the first step for his education by sending him to Leyden at the age of nine years, and they communicated their determination to the States-General, who thanked them for their message. They chose as his governor his uncle, Frederick of Nassau, lord of Zuylestein, a natural son of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, by whom he had been acknowledged, and who bore the reputation of a man of courage and sense. He displayed a passionate attachment for the House of Orange, and on the occasion of the birth of the young son of William II. caused the entrance gate of his residence to be adorned with texts taken from the Old Testament, in which he applied to him all that the prophets had predicted of the Messiah. The direction of the young prince's education was confided to the Calvinist minister Cornelius Trigland, who, having taken his doctor's degree at Leyden, had made himself known as a preacher at the Hague, and justified the maternal choice by his religious instructions as well as by his patriotic counsels. He wrote for his pupil the 'Idea or Portrait of a Christian Prince,' as Fénelon later wrote 'Télémaque' as the manual of education of the Duke of Burgundy. He lived long enough to see him restored to the power of his ancestors, and, in a farewell letter which he wrote to him before his death, he was able to exhort him to make a good use of it. The best masters were associated with Trigland in his duties. Professor Bornius was appointed director of the young prince's studies. A Frenchman named Chapuyzeau, 'who had written some comedies, and who was master of the Latin language as well as of the French,' was

to assist him as preceptor. The former secretary of the Prince of Orange, Huyghens de Zuylichem, father of the scholar Huyghens, was charged with his instruction in Dutch literature. An establishment was provided for the young prince with as much ceremonial as if he had retained his father's offices; the posts of first gentleman in waiting, of first equerry, and of first steward were filled by the sons of Heenvliet, Renswoude, and Boreel, all three members of noble families in the republic. Diplomacy was interested in the surroundings of the young prince, in anticipation of the destinies which might await him, and Louis XIV.'s ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, recommended the French Government to spare no expense 'in gaining over his governor and his masters.' He was thus being prepared by his education to take advantage of a turn of fortune which sooner or later was inevitable.

The death agony of the republic of England, in paving the way for the inevitable restoration of royalty, had already shown the republican party the necessity for coming to terms with the House of Orange. In the previous year the magistrates of Amsterdam, on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Anhalt to Henrietta Catherine, second daughter of the Princess Dowager, invited the family of the young prince to a splendid entertainment. Immediately after the restoration of Charles II., they accorded a solemn reception to the Princess Royal and her son. The Grand Pensionary himself, by well-timed advances, gave proof of the most conciliatory intentions. A month before the recall of the King of England he took part in a banquet given by the corporation, at which several of the adherents of the House of Orange assisted, and at which his father, formerly prisoner of the Stadtholder William II., was the first to propose the health of the young prince.

Charles II. once seated on his throne, good intentions were no longer sufficient, but must be followed by actions. De Witt was inclined to concessions, but wished to limit them. He proposed to obtain for the King of England's nephew the protection of the States, by making him, as he

was fond of saying, 'the child of Holland,' and by reopening to him the entrances to his ancestral offices, which had been closed by the Act of Exclusion. But, on the other hand, he did not wish that either the powers of stadtholder or even the military commands exercised by his ancestors should be disposed of in his favour, although declaring that the office of captain- and admiral-general could not fail to belong to him when he should attain his majority. He thought it far preferable thus to place him under obligations to the States, rather than encourage his princely ambition, by acknowledging his right to his paternal inheritance. A restoration brought about for the benefit of a child appeared to him to render inevitable the supremacy of the Orange party, which would thus be enabled to satisfy at its ease its political animosities and its leanings towards the King of England. This insurmountable distrust, which John de Witt himself confesses to, prevented him from entertaining a bolder project, the immediate restoration of the son of William II. to his father's offices, under the direction of the States, who should assume the regency till the majority of the young prince. By thus sealing the alliance between republican liberty and the power of the Prince of Orange, De Witt might have found the solution of all the difficulties he had to overcome, and under the weight of which he was destined at last to sink. He contented himself with expedients, and mistook a compromise for a solution.

The first offers of an agreement were made to him by the Princess Royal, on the subject of a proposal made to the States of Guelders by the deputies of Nimeguen to appoint the young prince captain-general. In order to gain over the Grand Pensionary to her son's cause, she had recourse to the intervention of one of his intimate advisers, Laurent Buysero, who acted as his secretary, and who has kept a curious register of all the negotiations which were confided to him. But at the very beginning of the conferences, De Witt, not wishing to encourage his hopes, declared that the proposal of the deputies of Nimeguen appeared to him inopportune, and that the youth of the prince did not allow of his being put in

possession of the ancestral power which was his by inheritance.

To leave an opening, however, for negotiations, he gave it to be understood that he might be able to induce the States of Holland to take upon themselves the education of the young prince, as well as the administration of his property, undertaking to pay him a considerable pension. 'If the States adopt him as their ward,' he said, 'they will give him the greatest possible proof of the interest they take in him.' The Princess Royal was disappointed rather than satisfied by these offers. She said as much to De Witt, who had come to see her at her country house of Honsholredyk, and represented to him that she had thought it right to consult the King of England, who made higher claims for her son. Ten days later, she repaired to the Hague, to inform De Witt of the answer which she had received from Charles II. 'This answer insists on the immediate nomination of the young prince to the great offices of the state,' writes the Grand Pensionary. 'Her Highness has declared to me that this is a command which she does not dare to disobey.' She thought she could reckon on the magistrates of Amsterdam, and, in particular, on the uncle of John de Witt, Cornelius de Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, with whom she had conferred; but, deterred from any compromise by the urgency of John de Witt, they finally refused their co-operation to the young prince's mother.

Irritated by this resistance, she determined to force the States of Holland to give her satisfaction by threatening them with the displeasure of the King of England and the revolt of the Orange party. She addressed to them a message, which she also communicated to the States-General, announcing to them that, being on the point of visiting the king her brother, she offered them her good offices. 'But,' she added, 'I hope to take with me the assurance that my son will obtain the civil and military posts which his forefathers have honoured since the origin of the republic, and that the States will in the meantime take the charge of his education.'

The States of Zealand, led away by the popular movement which was stirring up afresh the towns of the province,

hastened to respond to this appeal. They granted to the Prince of Orange the title of premier noble, which gave him the right of representing alone the whole body of the nobility in their Assembly, with the restriction that he should not make use of it before his majority. At the same time they decided that their deputies to the States-General should propose to reserve to him, in advance, the offices of captain- and admiral-general of the republic, in order that he might exercise those functions at the age of eighteen. They sent also a solemn deputation to the States of Holland, under the leadership of their councillor pensionary, Adrian Veth, to demand from them his nomination by anticipation as stadtholder of the two provinces. Notwithstanding the moderation of the first minister of Zealand, who kept up the most friendly relations with De Witt, this step, encouraged by the States-General, could not fail to be the signal for a fresh coalition against the States of Holland.

Symptoms of disunion were beginning, moreover, to be displayed in their own Assembly. One of the most highly esteemed members of the nobility, De Wimmenum, president of the board of councillor deputies, after having enjoyed the favours of the republican party, appeared desirous of giving proofs of his devotion to the Orange party. He induced the nobles to pronounce in favour of the restoration of the stadtholdership. The deputies of Leyden and Enckhuyzen supported this proposal, while those of Haarlem and Alkmar demanded that the post of captain- and admiral-general should be guaranteed to the prince, even if it should be to the exclusion of that of stadtholder. The Grand Pensionary was inclined to this compromise, but, fearing that he might fail in getting it accepted, he gave the partisans of the son of William II. to understand that they could not but gain by waiting the course of events, and brought round the Assembly to a fresh proposition. The States of Holland, hastening to accept it, consented, by a unanimous vote, to direct the education of the young prince, in order, as they stated, ‘to bring him up in the practice of all the virtues which might render him fit for the functions, dignities, and offices which had

belonged to his predecessors.' They promised besides to watch over the preservation of his lands and goods, and to provide sumptuously for the expenses of his education, paying him at the same time an annual pension. But they avoided any engagement by which they might have appeared to agree to the appointment to the stadtholdership demanded on his behalf. To re-open to him, however, an entrance to the powers of his ancestors, they revoked the Act of Exclusion, and declared that they had only consented to it in order to satisfy the demands of Cromwell. While refusing to restore to the Prince of Orange his ancestral offices, they thus left to him the hope of some day resuming possession of them.

The Princess Royal, though her hopes were not entirely satisfied, saw the necessity for proceeding cautiously, and before embarking for England she followed the advice of her wisest counsellors, who urged upon her to accept the offers of the States of Holland. Having on September 29, 1660, sent them a first answer, still savouring somewhat of menace, she now addressed to them a letter in which she showed herself disposed towards an agreement, by submitting to them the choice of the commissioners who were to superintend her son's education. She proposed some members of their Assembly whom they could not look upon with suspicion and joined to them the Grand Pensionary De Witt, to whom she paid the most flattering testimony. 'Since your Noble and High Mightinesses,' she wrote, 'have consented to use your prudence in taking care that the prince our son shall be perfectly instructed, from his earliest age, in the privileges and customs of this country and the character of its inhabitants, in which we have found by experience that the Councillor Pensionary De Witt is profoundly acquainted and is accustomed to give freely and undisguisedly his excellent instructions, it will be very agreeable to us if your Noble and High Mightinesses will include him in the said commission.'

The rivalry between the two princesses was nearly hindering the conclusion of this compromise. The Princess Dowager remonstrated at the appointments made by her daughter-in-law without the participation of the other guardians. In

accordance with the advice of the Elector of Brandenburg, the young prince's uncle, she proposed the nomination of commissioners hostile to the republican party, in order to regain thus the confidence of the Orange party, who were displeased at the concessions made by the Princess Royal. The States of Holland, however, gave the preference to the commissioners designated by the young prince's mother. These were Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, known for his moderation, De Noortwyck, one of the most loyal partisans of the new government, Abraham de Beveren, lord of Barendrecht, burgomaster of Dordrecht, Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, burgomaster of Amsterdam and Peter Forest, town councillor of Alkmar and president of the Court of Audit; the last three friends or relations of the Grand Pensionary, who was appointed to assist, or rather to direct them. An annual sum of from 36,000 to 40,000 florins was voted for the education of the young prince and the powers given to the commissioners were carefully limited, so as only to be exercised with the participation of the two Princesses of Orange, but under the sovereign control of the States. Beverwaert, who had been sent to London as the ambassador of the republic, was commissioned to represent them with the Princess Royal during her residence in England.

The reconciliation seemed to be accomplished. The Grand Pensionary of Holland proposed to take advantage of it in the interests of the prince as well as in those of the state. 'We ought,' he wrote confidentially to Beverwaert, 'to keep to the two following rules: first, to neglect nothing in teaching the prince virtue and learning, as well as a perfect acquaintance both with the customs and rights of this country and with the character of its inhabitants, in order that he may acquire their love and affection; secondly, to conduct this education in such a manner that the magistrates and inhabitants of this country may perceive that it could not be confided to men more honest or more attached to the House of Orange.' The Princess Royal, perceiving the loyalty with which De Witt had kept his word, showed on her part the most favourable dispositions, when suddenly these hopes of a

good understanding were sadly disappointed. Six weeks after her arrival in England, the sister of Charles II., attacked by small-pox, to which her husband, the Stadtholder William II., had fallen a victim, died suddenly of that disease, on December 24, 1660. This event, which left the young Prince of Orange an orphan at the age of ten years, was an equally fatal blow to the Grand Pensionary of Holland. In her will the Princess Royal implored the King of Great Britain to act as a father towards the son she left behind. In response to this last appeal, Charles II. informed the States of Holland that he had accepted the legacy of the maternal guardianship, and appointed a commission presided over by the lord chancellor, to superintend in his name the interests of his nephew concurrently with the Dutch commissioners. In spite of the interchange of the most friendly notes, this intervention awakened uneasiness in the States of Holland, by leading them to fear inevitable rivalries. Moreover, the death of the Princess Royal restored to the grandmother of the Prince of Orange her authority in the education of her grandson, and the Princess Dowager, dissatisfied with the choice of commissioners appointed on the nomination of her daughter-in-law, appeared little disposed to come to an understanding with them. She insisted that they should work in her house and in her presence, not choosing to acknowledge any authority but her own.

Constantly renewed conflicts of authority set the guardians of the young prince and the States of Holland at variance. Thus they disputed for the possession of a coffer which the Princess Royal had left at the Hague, and in which were inclosed some secret papers which had belonged to the late Stadtholder. The States of Holland, fearing that it might be made away with, were determined to keep it in their custody till the majority of William II.'s son, while the Princess Dowager arrogantly claimed it and refused to submit to the authority of the court of justice, which at length got the better of her resistance. 'It was,' wrote De Witt, 'a pretension to which no Prince of Orange had ever dared to raise his thoughts, and which is so highly offensive to the state, that it would be a sufficient reason, if such sentiments were

inspired in the Prince of Orange, to prevent the state from ever confiding to him any authority or power.'

The private advisers of the young prince seemed at the same time determined to provoke the States of Holland, by wishing to occupy those parts of the ancient palace of the Princes of Orange which had remained empty; they obtained possession of the keys, and the States, who claimed, in their position as sovereigns of the republic, to be the masters of the public property, demanded that they should be given back to them. 'It is sad to see,' said John de Witt on this occasion, 'that all sorts of means are tried to render useless to the Prince of Orange the resolution taken by the States of Holland with regard to his education, and that the said States are as much disgusted as their commissioners, who are, however, so well disposed to the service and promotion of his Highness.

The King of England continued to encourage this ill-will by the animosity which he showed towards the States. The ambassador of the States-General in London, Beverwaert, represented to him vainly, with his accustomed frankness, 'that if his own son were concerned, he would rather see him recognised by the States of Holland as the child of the republic, than have him forced by a premature nomination on the acceptance of those in authority.' Charles persisted nevertheless in deciding on all occasions against the Dutch commissioners who were charged with the education of his nephew. On one occasion he withdrew his favour from the Princess Royal's secretary, Nicholas Oudart, whom he could not forgive for having previously made him sign a letter expressing to them his satisfaction. On another occasion he addressed to them the most offensive complaints, reproaching them, amongst other grievances, with not having placed a daïs in the apartments of the Prince of Orange. It was more especially towards the Grand Pensionary of Holland that he displayed these hostile sentiments, reproaching him with having usurped the power which ought to have belonged to his nephew. Instead of giving him the satisfaction which De Witt had hoped to obtain, Charles refused to send back the Act of Exclusion, which the States of Holland had just repealed.

The Grand Pensionary would have desired, moreover, that the King should have attested 'that this article of the treaty concluded with Cromwell, far from having been suggested to the Protector, had been rigorously exacted as a condition of peace, without any persuasion having been spared to induce him to renounce it;' he had himself drawn up the terms of this justification. But Charles evaded the demand which he had promised to comply with and on which De Witt was careful not to insist. The Grand Pensionary expressed nevertheless his indignation at the allegations of the King of England, who pretended to have received from him at the Hague, on behalf of the Prince of Orange, as the price of oblivion for his past conduct, promises which he had not fulfilled. De Witt repelled this injurious accusation. 'It appears to me scandalous,' he wrote to the ambassador of the States, 'that in his interview with you the chancellor should have let it be understood that in consequence of my promises the king had deigned to forget what had passed, as if we had demanded of his Majesty a pardon of which, thank God, we have no need.' 'I am not surprised, however,' he adds, 'that I have the reputation over there of being opposed to the interests of the Prince of Orange, for I have, at all times, placed them after those of the state.'

These mutual recriminations threatened an approaching rupture. The signal for it was given by the convention signed between the King of England and the Elector of Brandenburg, who was passionately attached to the interests of the Princess Dowager, whose daughter he had married. The King and the Elector, as uncles of the young prince, shared with his grandmother the guardianship of their nephew, but left in her hands power amounting to unlimited authority. As regarded the States of Holland, they did not appear inclined to do much more than tolerate their participation, and only consented to admit it in order that the son of William II. might continue to receive his pension. They were careful, moreover, to show their distrust of the States, by claiming the right to impose upon them fresh delegates for the superintendence of the young prince's education. They

required them not only to add to the members of the Assembly already charged with that office the commissioners that the Princess Dowager had before proposed, but also to recognise the right of the other provinces to be represented by deputies chosen by themselves.

The States of Holland were indignant at such changes being made without their consent in the conventions which they had agreed to with the Princess Royal. Forced to abdicate if they yielded, or to come to a quarrel if they resisted, there remained only one step for them to take, the least dangerous and the most cautious, that of renouncing the education of the Prince of Orange the moment that they found themselves no longer free to direct it as they pleased. De Witt had already let it be seen that he would not hesitate to withdraw, in the event of contests arising. 'If those who are the nearest relations of his Highness,' he wrote, 'make it clear that they do not perceive that if the States took upon themselves the trouble of the guardianship, it was in the interest of his Highness and in no way for our own, there will be less difficulty in inducing the States not to meddle any longer in the said guardianship, than there was in inducing them to make up their minds to do so.'

This prediction was justified. In answer to the provocation offered them, the States of Holland, notwithstanding the contrary advice of eight towns, amongst others those of Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, and Enckhuyzen, determined to renounce for the present a superintendence which compromised their sovereign dignity, from the moment when they could no longer exercise it except with the approbation of the other guardians, two of whom were foreign princes.

In wishing, as he himself declared, 'to make himself master of the republic through the ties he had contracted with the Princess Dowager and the Elector of Brandenburg, and by their intrigues,' Charles II. had detached the States from his nephew's interests. 'He found them determined not to permit him to meddle in the affairs of the prince, through whom he would have liked to reign over them himself.' The Grand Pensionary, disappointed in the efforts at conciliation

for which he had loyally striven, showed himself the decided partisan of resistance. According to the despatch of a French agent, he expressed himself thus: 'No doubt,' he said, 'good policy demands that we should show the greatest deference towards so great a king; but if it is assumed that the King of England's authority should oblige free states to do anything by force, I shall oppose it in the name of Holland; supposing that Holland does not agree to this opposition, I shall oppose it in the name of the town of Dordrecht, of which I am the deputy; if the town of Dordrecht will not authorise me, I shall oppose it in the name of my family; and finally, in the event of my family not being of my mind, it will remain to me to oppose it alone, as far as I am able.'

The disputes with regard to the guardianship of the Prince of Orange could not but be fatal to the negotiations entered into by the United Provinces with the new King of England for the conclusion of a treaty. They had till now rendered useless the embassy sent to London with the object of making Charles II. the ally of the republic. The States-General had hastened to recall the ambassador Nieupoort, who, in consequence of his close relations with Cromwell, and the opposition he had made to the restoration of Charles II., could not be left with the new king. They had designated as his successors four envoys extraordinary: Simon van Hoorn, burgomaster of Amsterdam, one of the most trusty confidants of John de Witt, Michael van Gogh, deputy of Zealand, Joachim Ripperda, deputy of Groningen and Louis of Nassau, lord of Beverwaert, who, by dissuading the Stadtholder William II. from besieging Amsterdam, and thus preventing him from provoking a civil war, as a consequence of his attempt at a coup d'état, had won the confidence of the republican party without losing that of the Orange party. Beverwaert, whom they had chosen as the chief of the embassy, and whom they had sent on in advance, was likely to be welcome to Charles, from his birth and connections. A natural son of the Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau, he was the devoted adviser of the Princess Royal, and his particular friend was the Marquis of Ormonde, the

King of England's minister, whose son, the Earl of Ossory, married his eldest daughter. His second daughter married, later, Lord Arlington; the youngest, Charlotte of Nassau, became celebrated in London at the meetings presided over by the Duchess of Mazarin, surrounded by her train of men of letters—Saint-Real, Saint-Evremont, and many more. All three were worthy of their mother, who, endowed with the most seductive charms, was the best auxiliary of her husband's negotiations. Beverwaert's scrupulous honesty contributed, moreover, to ensure for him the confidence of the English Government.

Scarcely had he arrived in London when he was informed that, unknown to him, Charles II. had bestowed on his son Odyk, whose irregularities and debts were a dishonour to his father's name, a portion of the profits obtained by the import of Rhine wines, and he believed that this liberality amounted to an income of 400*l*. This appeared to him opposed to the oath by which the ambassadors of the republic engaged to accept no gifts. That he might not be accused of failing in it, even involuntarily, he sent in his resignation, refusing even to carry on his functions till the States, better informed than himself, had pronounced that his son did not enjoy the privilege which had been promised him. The interests of the republic could not be confided to a diplomatist better fitted te serve them by means of his good reputation.

While the States had made choice of an ambassador as loyal as he was conciliatory, and who gave the new king the most entire satisfaction, Charles II. had sent back to the Hague Cromwell's intriguing minister, Downing, well known for the hostile sentiments which he had never ceased to display towards the United Provinces. Compromised by his services to the republican party, he had not waited for the restoration before insinuating himself into the favour of Charles II. While the latter was at the Hague, where, notwithstanding the prohibition of the States of Holland, he had come secretly to visit his sister, an individual in disguise was shown into his presence.

Downing, having made himself known, begged the prince to forgive a course of action which the misfortunes of the

times had forced upon him, and advised him to withdraw without delay, the States having promised to deliver him up to Cromwell. According to the same narrative, Charles II. taking advantage of the warning, departed in great haste; and Downing, in order to convince him of the service which he pretended to have rendered him, sent trusty persons to arrest him, after giving him time to place himself in safety. Even supposing that this story was only an invention, Downing, it is certain, took steps to regain the favour of the new king, through the intervention of his brother-in-law, Lord Howard, who had openly declared himself in favour of the royalist party. After a long interview with him, Charles II. created him a knight, and promised to leave him in possession of his post. His return to the Hague, signalised immediately on his arrival by fresh disputes about etiquette, soon showed, as De Witt wrote, that 'the English always remain English, and that changes of government produce no change in their dispositions.'

The King of England appeared, moreover, to have lent himself to negotiations only to supply his financial needs, and he applied vainly to Beverwaert to obtain for him from the States a loan of some millions of florins. The quarrels which he stirred up made an agreement hopeless. Not wishing to derogate from Cromwell's pretensions, Charles II. refused to allow a right of fishing within a radius of ten miles along the coast, to the great prejudice of the trade of the United Provinces. Their fishermen had even been driven with violence from the British seas, and the States-General could not get their complaints listened to. 'I have declared to Downing,' wrote De Witt, haughtily, 'that sooner than acknowledge this imaginary sovereignty over the seas, or even receive from the English, as a concession, that freedom of navigation and fishing which belong to us by natural right, we would shed our last drop of blood.'

A year later, the negotiations, which seemed to promise no hope of success, were happily concluded. Beverwaert, obliged to return to Holland on account of his wife's health, and disheartened by the unfavourable reception given to his proposals,

had sorrowfully renounced the completion of the work of his embassy. The other plenipotentiaries who remained in London after his departure had also received orders to return home immediately, when the English Government made up its mind to give them the satisfaction so long delayed. By the terms of the treaty, dated September 4, 1662, the right of fishing was restored to the inhabitants of the United Provinces, while on the other hand the right of English ships to a salute was no longer disputed in the British seas, and in compensation for the losses which the East India Company might have caused the English, the island of Pouleron was restored to them. The two powers, moreover, engaged to refuse shelter or protection to exiles and rebels who should seek a refuge on English or Dutch territory. No engagement was entered into in favour of the Prince of Orange; and Charles II., having thus desisted from his demands, renewed the most friendly declarations. 'If we yield to you the honour of having been the first to put the treaty into execution,' he wrote to the States-General, thanking them for having restored to him the island of Pouleron, 'we shall at least have the honour of carrying it on, and of making it appear by our actions that we shall be the last to infringe it. The Grand Pensionary gladly acknowledged 'that nothing could be added to the contentment felt by the States at the sentiments of confidence and friendship which his Majesty expressed towards them.'

In order that dispositions which had hitherto been hostile should have suddenly become so favourable, it had been necessary for the Grand Pensionary not to allow himself to be disheartened by any failures. Determined to refuse to the King of England any concession that might imperil the preservation of the republican government, to which he had sworn fidelity, De Witt tried to gain his good graces by sparing no efforts towards securing efficient support among those who surrounded him. With this view he appealed to the Queen of Bohemia, aunt of Charles II., at whose court she had sought refuge, in the hope that she would show her gratitude for the hospitality afforded her during her residence in Holland. Perceiving that she did not possess sufficient influence to ren-

der him the services which he expected from her, he attempted by means of a bribe to gain over one of the king's ministers, the Marquis of Ormonde, who, like most courtiers, promised much and did nothing. The support given by the Earl of Clarendon was more sincere and more efficient. 'I do not doubt,' writes De Witt to the Chancellor of England after the conclusion of the treaty, 'that you will give the last touches to a work which is in reality your own, and that you will be the instrument which will cause it to produce the effects necessary for the preservation and strengthening of friendship and intercourse between the two nations.'

The peace with Portugal, concluded by means of the urgent intervention of the Grand Pensionary, was at the same time a cause of satisfaction to which the King of England, who had just married the Portuguese Infanta, could not venture to appear indifferent. The republic had refused, hitherto, to allow Portugal to retain the conquest of Brazil, which she still hoped to recover from her; but negotiations had been abruptly broken off by the treason of the Portuguese ambassador, Ferdinand Telles de Faro, who forsook his post in order to go over to the service of the King of Spain. They were resumed by Count Miranda, who carried them through in spite of the opposition of Zealand and Guelders, who were both concerned in the West India Company, and to whom the loss of Brazil would therefore be prejudicial. Under pressure from Holland, the States-General in August 1661 voted, by a majority, for the treaty, in favour of which Schulenburg, deputy of Groningen, the president for the week, who was accused by the States of his province of having allowed himself to be bought over, had given his decision. According to the conventions stipulated on each side, the United Provinces, abandoning Brazil to Portugal, retained the Portuguese colonies which they had taken possession of in the West Indies; and in addition, the States-General obtained the promise of an indemnity of 8,000,000 florins, payable in sixteen years, as the price of their renunciation of Brazil. The exchange of the ratifications of the treaty was still kept in suspense for more than a year, in consequence of the intrigues of Downing, who did not wish to leave the merit of it to the States-

General; but De Witt's firmness overcame all these difficulties, and he was able to take credit to himself with Charles for the efficient co-operation which he had given to English diplomacy.

Further displays of good-will appeared to De Witt no less necessary for satisfying the King of England, who had been irritated at his opposition to the restoration of the stadtholdership, and he consented to concessions from which his reputation has suffered. Since the return of the new king to London, the promises of amnesty had been succeeded by cruel acts of reprisal, and the English Government, impatient to give effect to them, had complained on several occasions of the shelter afforded in Holland to the judges of Charles I. Six months after the restoration the French ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, writes: 'It is stated that three of the late king's judges are at Amsterdam, and that if Charles II. demands that they should be given up, he will not be refused, but they will be allowed to escape.' This information was correct. Downing, therefore, did not wish to let himself be taken by surprise if the presence of the regicides were notified to him. No outlaw being at that time on their territory, the States, notwithstanding some hesitation which was combated by De Witt, yielded to the request made to them by the English ambassador, without suspecting that they might have cause to repent of it. In conformity with his demand, they furnished him with a blank warrant, with directions to the Grand Pensionary to execute it whenever he should be required to do so. This violation of the law of nations was in accordance with the manners of the times; it was frequently a mark of consideration from one king to another. Louis XIV. had shortly before given up to Charles II. an English refugee, and some years later he caused a Protestant agent, Roux of Marseilles, to be carried off from Sweden by means of an ambuscade, and mercilessly executed in Paris. It would have appeared, however, that a republic which prided herself on giving shelter to all outlaws could not without dishonour infringe the laws of hospitality, and it was in defiance of all her traditions that she set them aside.

Seven months after the consent so imprudently given to

Downing by the States of Holland, the three judges of Charles I. whom the magistrates of Amsterdam had on a former occasion shielded from him returned secretly to Delft to fetch away their wives, believing they had no longer any danger to fear. They were Barghstead, formerly governor of the Tower of London, Corbet, and Okey, the latter of whom had been Downing's benefactor, having obtained for him his first employment under Cromwell. Downing, who troubled himself little about gratitude, having been informed of their arrival, presented to the Grand Pensionary of Holland his demand that the blank warrant which had been given him should be executed, quoting to that effect the last resolution of the States. De Witt, bound by his instructions, thought himself obliged to obey them, hoping perhaps that before they could be arrested the three ex-members of the English Parliament might have time to take to flight. But Downing had caused them to be so closely watched that it was impossible for them to escape his search, and he had them arrested before they had had time to suspect the danger which threatened them. He hastened to demand their extradition, and the States were not at liberty to refuse it without bringing upon themselves a declaration of war. In vain they tried to throw upon the magistrates of Delft the responsibility of giving the orders, either in the hope, by fresh delays, of affording the prisoners a last chance of escape, or to spare themselves the humiliation of giving them up. Without paying any attention to the earnest supplications addressed to them, and in spite of the courageous resistance made by some of the deputies of their Assembly, they delivered up to Downing the victims for whom Charles II.'s vengeance was waiting. 'They wished,' writes De Witt to the Chancellor Clarendon, 'to anticipate what could only be demanded of them in virtue of the treaty,' of which they hoped thus to hasten the conclusion.

The weakness into which the Grand Pensionary had allowed himself to be hurried caused him, however, some remorse. 'It would give satisfaction here,' he writes to the ambassador Beverwaert, 'if the King of England would allow himself to be persuaded to pardon the culprits, on the intercession of their

Noble and High Mightinesses. Will you be so good as to feel your way discreetly and give me your opinion, for such an intercession cannot be made without the almost certainty of its not being refused?' Charles II. cared little about these barren wishes, and before the ambassador of the republic, convinced of the uselessness of taking any steps, had ventured to ask for their pardon, the three regicides had been executed in London on a charge of high treason.

A clamour of indignation arose in the United Provinces at the iniquity of this concession, with which De Witt was reproached as an act of cowardice. The King of England's ministers hastened to testify their gratitude, of which Charles II. did not fail to give him compromising proofs. The Grand Pensionary felt himself embarrassed by these encomiums, which ascribed to him the merit due to Downing. 'I should have been better pleased,' he writes to Beverwaert, 'if in showing his satisfaction the king had not named me, or at any rate if you had been so good as not to refer to it in your despatch. Making it the glory and the aim of my actions to uphold my superiors, the States of Holland, I should be unable to succeed if I did not cause the justice that is their due to be rendered in full to their Noble and High Mightinesses.' Thus, in the letter which he addressed to the Chancellor Clarendon, while overstepping the bounds of the most obsequious protestations, he defended himself from having contributed to satisfy Charles II. otherwise than by his own good-will, and by supporting the friendly sentiments which he had observed amongst the members of the Assembly. He had no intention, moreover, of giving any opportunity for fresh royal exactions. He had therefore caused to be inserted in the resolution on the extradition, 'that the authorisation given to Downing is only available for this once, and is to be no precedent for the future.'

These concessions, humiliating as they were, would not perhaps have sufficed to bring back Charles II. to an alliance with the United Provinces: it was the fear of a union between the republic and France against England which obliged him to conclude with the States-General the treaty which he had refused them for the last two years.

In order to obtain it, the States-General hastened the conclusion of the negotiations begun with France by their ambassador in ordinary, Boreel, and recognised the necessity for giving him the assistance of another envoy. The disordered condition of his private affairs, the retirement in which he lived with his wife Jacoba Carels, described, in a contemporary narrative, as 'a good, fat housekeeper,' a 'regular old woman of Amsterdam,' and the exaggerated simplicity of his mode of life, prevented him from keeping up the relations which were essential for his credit. 'Somewhat misanthropic and even surly,' say some of his contemporaries, 'he would have been better suited to a Northern court than to that of France. The States, out of consideration for his long services not wishing to recall him, appointed, as ambassador extraordinary, one of their most skilful diplomatists, Conrad van Beuningen, who had already represented them at the court of the King of Denmark during the wars in the North, and to whom the Grand Pensionary accorded his entire confidence. They associated with him John van Ghent, deputy of Guelders, who was attached to the interests of Holland, and Justus de Huybert, deputy of Zealand, pensionary of the town of Zierikzee.

Conrad van Beuningen, who had caused his inflexible firmness to be appreciated in the negotiations of the war in the North, was to have a great part to play during the period of his embassy in France. His somewhat haughty stiffness might stand in his way, and the art of conciliating sometimes failed him; but he joined to an obstinate inflexibility of character the resources of a mind fertile in expedients and a power of speech which never failed him in repartee. Charms of conversation, ease of manners, and the most varied acquirements, completed his diplomatic merits. Having a high opinion of himself, he did not allow himself to be intimidated by the majesty of royalty. After holding his own with imperturbable coolness against Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden, he did not find himself in any degree more embarrassed in treating with Louis XIV. amidst the splendours of Versailles whilst not submitting subserviently to monarchical etiquette. The King of France having one day laughed at an incorrect

expression which escaped him, 'Sire,' he said, 'if I made use of it, it was to enrich the French language.' He had the gift of readiness; the king's ministers reproaching him jestingly with no longer receiving their statements with the same confidence which he had shown them at the beginning of his embassy, he retorted, 'When I arrived here, as a Protestant, I believed that we were saved by faith; but now that I am living in the midst of Catholics I believe that we are only saved by works.' Proud of being a citizen of Amsterdam, he boasted of having placed the republic which he served on a level with the greatest kings.

The ministers of the States-General found France not only freed from the yoke of factions, but also delivered by the treaty of the Pyrenees from the foreign war which fostered internal dissensions. Mazarin, who was approaching the end of his career, had just succeeded in pacifying the kingdom and enlarging its boundaries. He had triumphed over the Fronde and imposed peace on Spain, from whom he recovered her greatest conquest, the great Condé, whom civil dissensions had unhappily made the ally of the enemies of France. Mazarin could now die in peace; he left the crown to a prince twenty-two years of age, who was ambitious to govern alone, and had prepared himself for the exercise of the royal authority. Van Beuningen extolled 'the promptitude, clearness, judgment, and reasonableness which he employed in the expedition of business, the amenity of his address, his patience in listening, and the art which he possessed of expressing his thoughts with a force and often with an eloquence which astonished those who heard the decision with which he spoke on public affairs.' He knew both how to make himself loved and how to make himself feared.

In taking on himself the government of his kingdom, Louis XIV. was gratifying the wishes of his people, who, wearied out by the fruitless agitations of party strife, preferred to be governed by a sovereign rather than by ministers. He held in his hand, so to say, the entire nation, which submitted voluntarily to a master. Mazarin dead, and Fouquet disgraced, he had no longer anything to expect from his

councillors but obedience to his will. The States-General had none the less to consider the line of conduct which his ministers might induce him to pursue in the direction of foreign politics. The post of secretary of state for foreign affairs continued to be held by Loménie de Brienne, who had remained faithful to the ancient traditions of French diplomacy in favour of the United Provinces, and whom Louis XIV. jestingly reproached with being 'a true Dutchman.' Two other ministers shared his opinions, the chancellor, Séguier, and the secretary of state for war, Michel le Tellier, who had just been authorised by Louis XIV. to associate with himself, with right of reversion, his young son Louvois, in whom the United Provinces were hereafter to find their most implacable enemy. They were eagerly supported by Marshal Turenne, who was directly related, through his mother, Isabella of Nassau, daughter of William the Silent, to the family of the Princes of Orange, under whose orders he had served his first campaign in the War of Independence. The services which he had rendered to the royal cause during the Fronde had earned him the gratitude of the French court, and he appeared disposed to use his influence in the interests of the republic.

But a new policy, one of hostility to the United Provinces, was beginning to find favour. It was encouraged by two ministers, of whom one wished to establish the commercial supremacy of France, and the other was determined to obtain for her fresh accessions of territory. These were Colbert and Lionne, who had both been bequeathed by Mazarin to Louis XIV., and who formed with Le Tellier the ministerial triumvirate of the first years of his reign.

Colbert, son of a shopkeeper of Rheims, had been employed in the service of the cardinal, who had discovered and appreciated his merits. The enemy of Fouquet, he had contributed to his downfall and had supplanted him. Admitting no distraction from public affairs, to which he devoted sixteen hours daily, as hard towards himself as towards others, obstinate and imperious, he had succeeded in pleasing Louis XIV. by contenting himself with a subordinate position, until

he was invested with the title of controller-general. Sure of the royal confidence, Colbert was able to pursue the execution of his great designs in all security, aided by the resources of his genius. He had undertaken to create industry and commerce in France. He stimulated manufactures, and, emulous of placing the French market beyond the reach of competition, he determined to close it to foreign products by means of heavy duties. Further, to assist navigation, and to give an impulse to the mercantile marine, he encouraged the foundation of great companies, which in the Baltic, the West Indies, and in the East, were to put a check to the long undisputed supremacy of Dutch commerce. He was therefore more disposed to treat the republic as a rival than as an ally.

Hugues Lionne, a gentleman of Dauphiné, born in 1611, and nephew of the former secretary of state, Servien, owed, like Colbert, his fortune to Mazarin. Appointed private secretary to Anne of Austria, entrusted with the task of preparing the conclusion of the treaty of peace between France and Spain, a skilful and fortunate negotiator in the Rhine Confederation, he had easily obtained, after the cardinal's death, the direction of foreign affairs, which was officially conferred on him when he succeeded as secretary of state to the post of Loménie de Brienne. Industrious, although fond of pleasure, his temperament was easy, supple, adroit and inexhaustible in resources. A complete master of the art of diplomatic corruption, knowing the price to be set on consciences in every court, he made himself familiar with the manners, language, politics and interests of the different nations of Europe. He could, therefore, easily assist by his negotiations the ambitious designs of Louis XIV., and thus contribute to the greatness of his reign. Impatient to avail himself of the weakness of the House of Austria, in order to resume the interrupted work of Richelieu and Mazarin and to obtain the Low Countries for France, he had little hope of finding the States-General favourable to this work of aggrandisement, and was determined if possible to do without their help in obtaining the annexation which he coveted.

The offers of a renewal of alliance proposed by the States-General had hitherto, therefore, been evaded. Moreover, the political antagonism of the two governments, the one founded on maxims of absolute power and the other on the principle of the free discussion of public affairs, placed obstacles in the way of friendly relations, by causing frequent occasions of collision between the king and the republic. The unpublished correspondence of Cardinal Mazarin and the French ambassador at the Hague, De Thou, shows the extent of the demands made by the French Government. He desired the States-General to prohibit their subjects, under severe penalties, 'from publishing in future any book relating to France without having previously obtained the authorisation of the king's ministers.' The States, notwithstanding their friendly dispositions, could not submit to such pretensions. There were other differences even more prejudicial to the negotiations. The edict of 1659, prohibiting foreign vessels from trading in the ports of France, except on payment of a crown per ton, drew forth vehement remonstrances from the United Provinces. They declared that the Dutch people, having been exempted by Henry IV. from the *droit d'aubaine*, which prevented strangers from inheriting property in France, were entitled to enjoy the same advantages as French subjects, and to obtain on that account the remission of a tax which weighed heavily on their commerce. But Colbert, who considered the tonnage duty as indispensable to the prosperity of the French mercantile marine, had constituted himself its obstinate defender. 'It will require much time and much prudence to convince him,' wrote Van Beuningen. The guarantee of the integrity of their possessions demanded by the States from France was another obstacle to an understanding between the two governments. The French court refused to include in it the town of Rhynberg and the lordship of Ravenstein, whose possession was disputed with the republic, the one by the Archbishop of Cologne, and the other by the Duke of Neuburg and the Elector of Brandenburg, who each maintained his right to it. The States-General, on their side, considering Rhynberg as

one of the ramparts of their dominions, would not renounce their claims to occupy it. 'To speak of the restitution of Rhynberg,' writes De Witt, 'would be enough to upset everything.'

The free right of fishing still more directly concerned the States-General; they could not prevail on England to allow them the enjoyment of it so long as it had not been accorded to them by France, and they therefore made it a condition of their treaty with Louis XIV. 'The commissioners charged to report upon it to the States,' writes De Witt, 'were unanimous in their opinion, and considered that we could in no way relax the terms demanded for the guarantee of fishing rights. The first order which our ambassadors are about to receive will be their recall, whether they succeed in concluding the treaty according to their instructions or are forced to leave without doing anything.' Fortunately for the United Provinces, the King of France took offence at the demands of England. 'I must admit,' he declared to his ambassador in London, 'that I have the same interest in this guarantee as the Dutch, since the right of fishing may just as well be refused by England to my subjects as to those of the States-General.' The chief difficulty which was delaying the treaty between France and the republic was thus removed, and it was shortly afterwards signed on April 22, 1662.

The alliance was both offensive and defensive. The King of France engaged, in the event of an attack on the United Provinces, to send them an auxiliary force of 12,000 men, and the States-General, in return, were to place at his disposal 6,000 men if required. On both sides the military contingent might be replaced by a subsidy in money fixed at 10,000 francs a month for every thousand soldiers. Moreover, the two States guaranteed to each other all their possessions, including in this reciprocal guarantee the free right of fishing. Finally, the duty of a crown per ton, which had given rise to so many disputes, was no longer to be demanded from the subjects of the United Provinces, except on their merchandise exported from France, and was, moreover, to be reduced to half a crown for vessels employed in the transport of salt, which constituted their chief

export trade. The duration of the alliance was extended to twenty-five years.

The States-General learned with satisfaction the conclusion of the treaty of Paris. The Grand Pensionary's cousin, Cornelius Ascanius van Sypestein, who was attached to the embassy of the United Provinces in Paris, acted as messenger to bring to the Hague the copy signed by the King of France, and was rewarded with a gold medal for the rapidity with which he had performed the journey in three days. 'We are happy to learn,' writes De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'that at last the troubles of this long negotiation are crowned with better success than could have been hoped. This close alliance, and the advantages of the conventions relative to trade, wipe out the wrongs which so many delays had done to the credit of the State in protracting the settlement of affairs.'

These expectations were in danger of being disappointed by fresh procrastination. Charles II., obliged to provide for the insufficiency of his financial resources, had sold Dunkirk to the King of France for the sum of five millions. Louis XIV., by retarding the ratification of the treaty, hoped to obtain from the States the territorial guarantee therein stipulated, not only for this fresh acquisition, but also for Lorraine, which Duke Charles IV., ignoring the right of succession claimed by his nephew, had just ceded to him. The States-General took alarm at these pretensions and refused to submit to them. Mutual concessions put an end to the dispute, which had lasted a whole year. Louis gave up the guarantee of Lorraine, and the States-General accorded to him that of Dunkirk, obtaining on their part a guarantee from France of the treaty which they had just concluded with England. To testify to the States his friendly intentions, Louis consented to the ratification, till now deferred, of the treaty, without insisting that the Act of Guarantee of Dunkirk should be previously delivered to him. 'I thought,' he writes to his ambassador at the Hague, 'that there would be no imprudence on my part in trusting the word of so honourable a man as the Sieur de Witt, as you will be careful to assure him.'

The interests of France were even more deeply engaged than those of the United Provinces in a conciliatory and considerate policy. For a long time past French policy had coveted the Spanish Netherlands, bordering upon the territory of the republic, the possession of which would enable France to extend her northern frontiers, which were too close to the capital. Richelieu had proposed to form the Netherlands into a Catholic republic, of which France could easily have secured the direction. Mazarin had at first other ideas in his mind. Meditating the annexation of these provinces to the French monarchy, he had sought to profit by the negotiations for the treaty of Westphalia, in order to acquire the Netherlands and Franche-Comté in exchange for Catalonia, of which France was then in possession. These proposals having led to nothing, he recognised the necessity for coming to terms with the republic of the United Provinces; and although disappointed by the peace of Münster which the latter had concluded with Spain, he did not despair of interesting her in the execution of the plan conceived by Richelieu. The project of forming the Netherlands into an independent republic, called in the despatches of that time the Cantonment, became henceforth the aim of his negotiations, and he flattered himself that he would easily obtain the consent of the States-General.

De Witt gave his entire adhesion to this policy, which appeared to him to be favourable to the interests of the United Provinces. He entered upon the matter with the principal deputies of the States of Holland and overcame the opposition of some of the magistrates of Amsterdam, who were in favour of an alliance between Spain and the republic, through the good offices of his uncle Cornelius de Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, who had great influence in the town council. To prevent the annexation of the Low Countries he was willing to consent to and to encourage their cantonment. He had adopted as his device the old saying, 'Gallum amicum, non vicinum'—the alliance, not the vicinity of France. Believing that Spain, weakened and exhausted, would be unable to defend against French conquest these provinces now isolated

and left to themselves, fearing besides that she would not desire to keep them and might return to the proposal already entered into with France of an exchange, he sought security for the United Provinces in the freedom and independence of the Netherlands; he desired to take them from Spain, but not to give them to France, hoping to bind them to the United Provinces by the ties of a confederation which might easily be established between the two republics. 'The cantonment of the Netherlands,' he said at a later period to the French ambassador, 'would have given repose and security to both.' To hasten the fulfilment of these projects, he went so far as to urge the French Government to send an army against the principal towns of Flanders, in order to force them, as he said, 'to take up arms for their liberty.' It was the Belgium of to-day that he proposed, so far back as the seventeenth century, should be added to the number of the States of Europe, in his statesmanlike forethought thus anticipating by nearly two centuries the work of modern policy.

The fresh pretensions of France were about to imperil once more the agreement which had apparently been secured. The marriage of Louis XIV. with the Infanta Maria Theresa, which was the result of the peace of the Pyrenees, threatened the United Provinces with unexpected dangers, and was preparing for Europe more than half a century of wars vainly interrupted by treaties. Maria Theresa had, it is true, renounced the crown of Spain, and Louis XIV. had ratified the renunciation in consideration of the promise of a dowry of 500,000 gold crowns. But scarcely was his marriage concluded when he sought to evade this engagement. He was the more interested in withdrawing from it that the only heir of Philip IV. king of Spain was a sickly child who did not appear likely to survive his father. Louis would not admit that any treaty could set aside the ancient and fundamental law of the Spanish monarchy which allowed females the right of succession to the throne; moreover, the dowry not having been paid, he considered the renunciation as void, and was determined henceforth to preserve intact the rights of the queen, his wife, over the whole of her paternal inheritance.

He was preparing at the same time to invoke other titles of inheritance which should enable him, on the death of Philip IV., to establish his claim to the greater part of the Netherlands and thus to dismember the Spanish monarchy without waiting till the succession became vacant. According to a custom of Brabant which was followed in some of the provinces of the Netherlands, the patrimonial possessions belonged to children born of a first marriage. A second marriage transmitted the inheritance to them, and the father who had married again only retained the revenue of his property. It was this purely local law of civil right, called Law of Devolution, which Louis XIV. wished to invoke for his own benefit. The Infanta of Spain, Maria Theresa, now queen of France, was the only daughter of Philip IV. by his first wife, Elizabeth of France. Louis XIV. asserted that the King of Spain, in contracting a second marriage with Maria Anna of Austria, had no longer a right to more than the revenue of that part of the Low Countries which was governed by the Law of Devolution; he therefore claimed the right of possession in behalf of the Infanta Maria Theresa, his wife. This claim appeared to have small foundation. It was abrogated by the Act of Renunciation, which annulled all rights of succession, whatever they might be. Besides, it only rested on a custom purely applicable to private rights, and foreign to political rights. Finally, it was difficult to admit that a monarchy could be deprived of some of its provinces in virtue of a right of succession contrary to the fundamental laws of that monarchy, so far as they regulated the transmission of the royal authority.

De Witt had been informed of the dispositions of the King of France while Van Beuningen was negotiating with him the treaty of alliance which had just been concluded. The acquisition of Dunkirk by Louis XIV., by giving him an advanced post towards the conquest of the Low Countries, confirmed the projects attributed to him. The Grand Pensionary of Holland could not fail to be alarmed at them. In the hope of inducing the French Government to renounce its ambitious designs, he pretended to desire an alliance between

the United Provinces and Spain, and despatched to Madrid, as ambassadors extraordinary, three envoys from the States-General. On the other hand, far from rejecting the advances of Louis, he determined to encourage them. Without renouncing the idea of cantonment of the Netherlands, he appeared disposed to accede to a partition of those provinces between France and the republic, if a partition was necessary in order to avoid annexation. By appearing thus to approach nearer to the views of the King of France, he hoped to gain time and thus to succeed in obtaining concessions. This policy of subterfuge and evasion which concealed so many dangers was about to show conspicuously the Grand Pensionary's prudence and suppleness of mind and to give proof of his diplomatic experience. Louis XIV., whose interest it was not to be too hasty in the execution of his designs, desired, on his side, to continue the course of negotiations and to secure in case of necessity an agreement with the United Provinces. Thus, making choice of a new ambassador whom he thought likely to receive the most cordial welcome at the Hague, he replaced De Thou by Count d'Estrades. De Thou was in ill odour with the French Government in consequence of the secret despatches of Wicquefort, whom Lionne employed as one of his regular correspondents. The haughty arrogance that he displayed in his last communications with the deputies of the States served as a pretext for hastening his recall. D'Estrades, on the contrary, enjoyed the entire confidence of his sovereign, and was likely to find no difficulty in insinuating himself into that of the States. He joined to his high reputation as a diplomatist the military renown which he had acquired in attaining successively to the ranks of major-general and lieutenant-general. Appointed mayor of Bordeaux for life as a reward for the services which he had rendered in Guyenne during the Fronde, he had been sent as ambassador to London after the recall of Charles II., and had just induced the King of England to sell the town of Dunkirk to the King of France, who held him in high honour in consequence of the success of this negotiation. Moreover, Count d'Estrades was not looked upon as a stranger

when he arrived at the Hague. He had served his first campaign in the war of the United Provinces against Spain, under the orders of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry, who had rewarded his courage by giving him the rank of colonel. Employed at a later period, before the peace of the Pyrenees, in negotiating an agreement with the States-General for the purpose of attempting, though unsuccessfully, to engage them, together with Cromwell, in a fresh naval war against Spain, he had contrived to open useful relations in the United Provinces, which, joined to his profound acquaintance with the institutions of the country, contributed to the success of his embassy.

The closest intimacy was speedily established between the French ambassador and the Grand Pensionary of Holland. D'Estrades, who hoped to gain by his liberality the good offices of the principal deputies, and who induced Beverningh to accept in default of a pension the portrait of the king surrounded with precious stones, was at first disconcerted by the disinterestedness of John de Witt. Obliged to acknowledge, as Turenne had warned him, the uselessness of offers 'against which the Grand Pensionary prided himself on exercising his virtue,' he writes to Louis XIV.: 'As for this man, he is incorruptible; he only wishes for esteem and kindness on your Majesty's part.' Not only did De Witt oppose to all attempts at bribery his own impenetrable integrity, but he also determined to baffle them by exacting from the deputies an oath to take no pay or salary from any foreign sovereign.

Far from allowing himself to be gained over by D'Estrades, De Witt won the latter by his manners and behaviour. He gratified his vanity in the first instance by courteously refraining from exacting that the first visit should be paid by him, though D'Estrades would not allow himself to be excused from it. He was careful at the same time to consider his interests by obtaining from the States of Holland the payment of the arrears which had been due to him for twelve years as colonel of one of their regiments, thus procuring for him a donation of 25,000 francs. The Grand Pensionary at the

same time renewed his declarations of zeal and devotion towards the King of France. 'The saying of your Excellency in the speech made at your reception, that his Majesty wished to imitate Henry the Great and had the same friendship and affection for this state as that great prince,' he writes in the first letter he addressed to him, 'gives me an opportunity of saying that we hope his Majesty will be a father to us as he was, and will bear with our shortcomings, oftener caused by the constitution of our republic than by lack of good-will.' D'Estrades allowed himself to be easily persuaded, and went so far as to bear testimony to the Grand Pensionary. 'I could not myself,' he declared to Louis XIV., 'be more zealous for the greatness and prosperity of your Majesty than M. de Witt appears to be.' The King of France, on his side, did not stint his praises. 'You may place the direction of my affairs,' he writes to D'Estrades, 'in such good hands as his, and leave the entire conduct of them to his zeal and experience. It is plain that God created him for great things, and I think myself that the acquisition of so good a friend was not a mere work of chance, but of the Divine Providence, which disposes early the instruments which it intends to employ for the glory of this crown as well as for the advantage and the safety of the United Provinces.'

Assured of the confidence of the French ambassador, De Witt sought to avail himself of it to discover the designs of Louis XIV. With this view he undertook to set aside the proposals made to him by the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, of bringing about a defensive alliance between the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands. But he demanded in return that the French Government should declare in favour of the enfranchisement of the Netherlands, thereby obliging it to renounce the ideas of annexation which Louis had not yet ventured to make known.

Determined to prevent any delay, he repaired to Count d'Estrades to announce to him that two Flemish deputies had come to demand on the part of the six principal towns of the Netherlands the assistance of Holland for the purpose of promoting an insurrection destined to deliver them from

Spanish domination. Unable to evade the promise of co-operation that was asked of him, D'Estrades allowed himself to be disconcerted. He answered that 'the States would find it more to their advantage to take steps which would enable them to ensure their well-being in future, without prejudice to the rights of the King of France over Flanders.' He thus indirectly made the first overtures towards the partition.

De Witt took advantage of the admission made by the French ambassador to request him to make known the rights to which Louis XIV. laid claim. The ambassador referred to those of the queen, Maria Theresa, alleging that no renunciation could hold good against them, since the dowry which she was to have received had not been paid. De Witt thus found himself in possession of the secret which he was anxious to discover; but he promised not to allow it to be suspected until the king should have made known his answer.

Louis, on receiving his ambassador's despatch, readily perceived the fault which D'Estrades had committed, and attempted to repair it. To cut short the projects for a union between the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands, he determined to encourage the proposals made by the Grand Pensionary. De Witt's fears were not, however, allayed, though he concealed them. He could not be satisfied without an undertaking on the part of Louis that he would desist from his pretensions, and he intended to leave no stone unturned to obtain it.

Impatient to attain in this manner the end of his policy, he offered the King of France an agreement by which Louis, as the price of his co-operation in the enfranchisement of the Netherlands, should annex those of their frontier towns which were contiguous to his kingdom, on the condition of leaving to the United Provinces those which were nearest to their territory. D'Estrades, far from accepting this proposal with eagerness, affected a disinterestedness of which the Grand Pensionary did not allow himself to be the dupe. To force him to lay aside his reserve, De Witt put forward resolutely the plan of partition, but without any desire to bring it to a conclusion. In answer to the invitation which he skil-

fully caused to be addressed to him, he drew up a long and remarkable report, in which, without renouncing the cantonment, he offered the King of France the co-operation of the States to put him in possession of the Netherlands after the death of the King of Spain and that of the Infant. This assistance was to be given on condition of obtaining in return for the United Provinces that part of the Netherlands which extends as far as Ostend. He thus postponed and limited, to the great advantage of the States-General, the claims of the King of France. By persuading Louis to await not only the death of Philip IV. but also that of the Infant, before claiming the inheritance of Maria Theresa, he obliged him to renounce the Law of Devolution.

Louis XIV., who wished to give his policy an appearance of moderation, in order to encourage De Witt to continue the negotiations, accepted with apparent satisfaction the plan of the Grand Pensionary. To maintain his confidence, the latter appointed a secret meeting with those deputies of the States of Holland with whom he was most closely united; he called them together at Ilpendam, in the country house situated at the gates of Utrecht which belonged to his uncle De Graeff de Zuidpolsbroeck, and boasted to the French ambassador that he had forced them to perceive the necessity for a speedy agreement. De Witt by these means obtained from Louis an injunction to D'Estrades 'to permit him to conduct the affair at his pleasure,' and obtained the full powers which he desired.

De Witt, however, only intended to make use of them for the purpose of forcing the King of France to explain himself, not doubting that Louis XIV. had some concealed intentions which would soon come to light. He therefore brought forward, as if against his will, unexpected objections to the project of a partition. He alleged more especially the insurmountable resistance of the deputies of Amsterdam, who feared that if Antwerp were once annexed by the States-General the free navigation of the Scheldt, which Spain had been obliged by the peace of Münster to renounce, would be restored and might cause the inevitable ruin of their commerce. He therefore undertook, with apparent reluctance, to

persuade D'Estrades that he would be obliged not only to be satisfied with the cantonment of the Netherlands, but perhaps to renounce even that, 'if he could not make his friends more tractable by enlightening them as to the rights which the King of France might be disposed to claim.'

Louis, persuaded by D'Estrades that there was no artifice concealed in this, did not think himself entitled to refuse the appeal. He determined to make known the motives which might induce him to declare the nullity of the renunciation of the queen to the inheritance of the King of Spain, letting it be understood at the same time that, if the republic would acknowledge his rights to the succession, he would refrain from putting them forward for the annexation of the Netherlands.

The Grand Pensionary awaited with impatience this declaration and seized upon it with his habitual dexterity. He began by secretly urging the King of Spain to pay Maria Theresa's dowry, in order not to leave the King of France the pretext that Louis XIV. brought forward for considering the renunciation of the Infanta as null and void; but he could not prevail on the Court of Madrid to follow his advice. He also attempted to take advantage of the communications of the King of France, who had hitherto asserted no claim to the Netherlands except those of succession to the whole Spanish monarchy, in order to prevent him from making any attempt on these provinces, so long as the death of Philip IV. and that of the Infant had not left vacant the succession to which Louis pretended. Fearing that he might find himself irrevocably engaged, the King of France was forced to unveil his ambitious designs, and, without hesitating to disavow his latest declarations, he asserted that the death of Philip IV. alone would give him a right to claim the Netherlands, thus appealing to the Law of Devolution.

Now that he was undeceived as to the apparent concessions of the King of France, De Witt, who was clear-sighted and did not allow himself to be easily led, tried to influence the resolutions of Louis XIV. by leading him to fear that the proposals for a confederation between the United Provinces and

the Netherlands might be favourably received at the Hague; they were, in fact, eagerly renewed by the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, who had remained for seven hours in conference with the commissioners of the States. But the Grand Pensionary soon perceived that the King of France was more offended than alarmed at this attempt at intimidation. 'I do not choose,' he wrote haughtily to D'Estrades, 'that the Sieur de Witt should lead me into everything he chooses and when he chooses by the terrors of this league. My affairs have not yet arrived at that point.' 'Such threats,' he added royally in another despatch, 'rouse my spirit, and if I chose to give you a precise answer, I could not perhaps refrain from ordering you to say things to him which would not be agreeable to hear. He may easily by his proceedings give rise to thoughts which are not now in my mind, and engage his superiors in a disagreeable business by his too great desire to serve them better.'

De Witt now perceived, with his usual prudence, the necessity for a compromise. Although he had handed to D'Estrades another memorandum intended to demonstrate by historical examples going back as far as Charlemagne that the Law of Devolution rested on no foundation as regarded the succession to the Duchy of Brabant, he would not persist in disputing it, provided he could succeed in preventing, even by means of a partition, the annexation of the Netherlands to France. In a conference to which he summoned the principal deputies, amongst others those of Amsterdam, who were the most refractory, he set forth, with the powers of persuasion natural to him, all the motives calculated to dissuade the United Provinces from breaking with France by means of an alliance with Spain. In order to convince them finally, he expressed his opinion to the States in a long report written by himself, which showed his statesmanlike penetration. After comparing the weakness of Spain to the growing strength of France, which could not fail to encourage Louis XIV. in claiming the succession to the Spanish monarchy, he considered how the Netherlands might be placed beyond his reach. On the one hand he showed the necessity for a league

to protect the cantonment of those provinces in the event of their wishing to form themselves into an independent republic, and on the other hand he pointed out its dangers, Spain not choosing to allow them to be taken from her, and France being doubtless disposed to consider the league as a provocation. The proposal of leaving the Netherlands to Spain appeared to him no less difficult or dangerous, and he drew attention to the weakness of the allies to whom the republic might appeal. He considered the German Princes and the Kings of Denmark and Sweden as too dependent upon France for anything to be expected from their aid. He represented in striking terms 'the empire as a skeleton, of which the different parts were kept together, not by nerves, but by a brass wire, and which had thus no natural movement;' Spain 'as a broken reed which could only be defended by engaging in a war of which the republic would be obliged to sustain nearly all the expenses.' 'The Netherlands,' he added, 'were open to France by the fortresses which Louis XIV. had conquered, and appeared, moreover, more inclined to become French than to remain Spanish. There was, therefore, no guarantee against their annexation to France except a speedy treaty. According to his proposals, the States were to leave Louis entire liberty to put forward the claims of the Queen of France to the Netherlands immediately on the death of the King of Spain; but they were only to undertake to give him their support when the succession was actually open—that is to say, after the death of Philip IV. and that of the Infant—and with the reservation that at one period or the other the United Provinces should be put in possession of the fortresses contiguous to their territory. 'It is better,' said De Witt in conclusion, 'to share with France than to attempt fruitlessly to dispute the enjoyment of his rights with a powerful king who is our ally.'

The deputies of the States allowed themselves to be convinced by these considerations. But encouraged secretly by the Grand Pensionary, and not wishing to remain exposed to the inconsistencies of French policy, they declared that they would not consent to the proposals for a new treaty unless

D'Estrades undertook to obtain its approval from the King of France without any alteration.

Unable now to find any further subterfuge, Louis XIV. refused definitely to pledge himself, and De Lionne, who had dissuaded him from making any concession, wrote haughtily to D'Estrades: 'The real design of his Majesty is to remain free, without digging for himself ditches which would prevent him from walking straightforward and with ease, according to what he may consider conducive to his glory, his advantage, and the greater welfare of his country.' The King of France, notwithstanding, thought himself under the necessity of conciliating the good-will of the Grand Pensionary. Foreseeing the suspicions which De Witt would not fail to spread if he refused to continue the negotiations that had been entered upon, he authorised his ambassador to assure the first minister of Holland 'that he would never make any attempt upon the Netherlands otherwise than justly and with the participation of his allies.'

This was the only satisfaction that the Grand Pensionary could obtain; it left, at any rate, the future open. By remaining loyal to the alliance with France, he hoped to be enabled to impose on Louis XIV. the necessity for concessions, and to prevent him from precipitating the execution of his plans. Moreover, having discovered his designs, without, it is true, being able to alter them, De Witt hoped to be able to take timely steps to arrest or restrain his ambition. In spite of the uneasiness still felt by the United Provinces, the chief danger he had feared, and which he had pointed out some years before in a confidential letter, viz. the diplomatic isolation of the republic, was now at an end. The two treaties that had been successively concluded with England and France, in leaving to the States-General a free choice of alliances, seemed to be a lasting pledge of external security. The medal which commemorated them bore for its inscription this line of Virgil: 'Deus nobis hæc otia fecit,' and on the reverse were these words: 'Peace, crowned with olives, unites the United Provinces to France as well as to Great Britain, and this union renders the State prosperous.'

The persistent policy of the Grand Pensionary had also accomplished successfully the work of internal pacification. He had sought to secure this by the union of Holland with Zealand. In order to promote the success of the negotiations entered into between the two provinces, De Witt had secured the consent of the pensionary of Zealand, Adrian Veth, who had occupied that post for the last four years, and had acquired preponderating authority in the Assembly of the States of that province. He had subdued and intimidated him by the lofty and somewhat arrogant firmness he displayed towards him, if one may judge by the letter in which he reproached him with not having kept his first promises. 'My sentiments are such,' he wrote, 'that if I intended to do something that I judged necessary to my honour, I would not assert to anyone that I would do the contrary; if I had once promised anyone that I would do anything, and if later I found myself obliged to alter my conduct, I should not hesitate a moment in acquainting him with it. If I had acted on my part in such a manner towards you, you would have reason to say that it had been a breach of faith; but this is entirely contrary to my custom, and if such a manner of acting is in accordance with yours, I do not know whether the old proverb, "True man, good Zealander," could be justly applied to you.' De Witt had, on the other hand, adroitly paid him every attention that could gain him over to the interests of Holland, and had used his influence on behalf of one of his brothers who was threatened with being excluded from the provincial court. Having earned his gratitude, he made him his ally.

The agreement between the two provinces was now concluded without difficulty. The States of Holland, to please the States of Zealand, settled in their favour the legal differences raised by the organisation of the court of justice common to the two provinces; they promised, besides, to renounce in their favour a certain number of offices which depended on the selection of the Prince of Orange, and of which they would have the disposal if they took him again under their guardianship. In return for these concessions, the States of

Zealand engaged not only not to elect a stadtholder without a preliminary agreement with Holland, but also not to demand of the States-General the restoration of the son of William II. to any of the offices of his ancestors before he had completed his eighteenth year. The Princess Dowager vainly opposed this compromise. According to a contemporary author, she openly declared that 'the Act of Exclusion of the Prince of Orange, passed ten years before by Holland and Cromwell combined, had not been more fatal to the interests of her grandson.' By the loss of the support of Zealand the Orange party seemed reduced to capitulation. 'I should have been glad to be of use to the young prince,' writes D'Estrades; 'but I now see clearly that for a long time to come his will be a fallen house.'

A year later the ambassador of the King of France showed publicly, by his behaviour towards the last descendant of the stadtholders, that he did not consider him as the inheritor of their authority. He seized the pretext of another dispute about etiquette to refuse to pay him any marks of respect. Their two carriages finding themselves side by side in the promenade of the Hague, the Voorhout, which was enclosed by barriers for carriage traffic, the prince wished to take the place of honour on the right hand, the nearest to the barrier; D'Estrades' coachman, attempting the same manœuvre, barred his passage. Neither would yield, and the dispute almost gave rise to a tumult. The people whom the fair at the Hague had collected in the streets of the town were crowding round the carriages and beginning with violence to take the prince's part, while D'Estrades was sending orders to all his followers to come to his assistance. The Grand Pensionary of Holland, informed of the danger, hastened to the spot with some of the deputies of the States, and, in deference to the remonstrances of the ambassador, sent for the Princess Dowager, who prevailed on her grandson to leave his carriage under pretence of joining her. To satisfy the King of France and prevent the renewal of a similar dispute, the States of Holland hastened to issue an order which obliged all their subjects, without any exception, to take in future the left hand in the promenade

of the Hague. The pretensions of the Prince of Orange had thus only brought upon him fresh humiliation.

Impatient to enjoy their supremacy at their leisure, the States of Holland determined to have it officially recognised, by ordering an alteration to be made in the public prayers, as recited in their province. They proposed to modify them in such a manner as not to allow any precedence to the States-General. Many pamphlets had been published for and against the revision of the liturgy. The one which made most impression was the work of the Grand Pensionary's cousin, also called John de Wit,[1] who had pronounced in favour of the new liturgy with the authority derived from his relationship. The Grand Pensionary had not encouraged him in thus taking the initiative, having no inclination for such innovations. 'It was forced on him,' wrote the French ambassador, 'by his friends, who sometimes obliged him to speak against his own opinion, and to make concessions, without which he could not have retained his power.' After the discussions had been prolonged for three weeks, the States of Holland enjoined on all ministers of religion who were their subjects to offer prayers first for the States of the province, their sole and legitimate sovereigns; then, for the States of the other provinces, their allies, and for the deputies who represented them in the Assembly of the Confederation. The States-General, who personified, so to say, the union and sovereignty of the United Provinces, were thus deposed from the rank which they claimed, and which had hitherto legally appertained to them; since they decided all questions of peace and war, the conclusion of treaties, and even the maintenance of religion. Their supremacy was nevertheless questionable, since their resolutions might have to be submitted for the consent of the other provinces. Under the appearance of a fresh quarrel, the old struggle was being kept up which the States of Holland had entered into with the federal power, whose superior authority they refused to acknowledge.

The other provinces, who could not escape from their sub-

[1] His family name, De Wit, was written with only one *t*.

jection to the States of Holland except by opposing to them the authority of the States-General, hastened to respond to the appeal of the States of Friesland who protested against this usurpation of power. The States of Holland paid no heed to their remonstrances, and, to dissuade them from a useless resistance, sent them a carefully studied message drawn up by John de Witt with the assistance of one of the pastors of Dordrecht, Jacob Lydius. In this manifesto, which won for him the most flattering commendation from the King of France, the Grand Pensionary explained to the other provinces that Holland was only making a regulation for the use of her own inhabitants, and to reassure them as to the import of the new form of prayer, he represented to them that they kept intact the right of acting as they pleased for the maintenance or revision of the ancient liturgy. The precautions which he caused to be taken that these political discussions should not degenerate into theological controversy, and to prevent the Calvinistic clergy from taking part in them, removed all pretext for religious passion and ensured the easy execution of the orders given by the States.

Accustomed to consider no measures of precaution as superfluous, the Grand Pensionary of Holland was careful to maintain confidence and union in the Assembly of the province. With this view he caused an Act to be passed, known under the name of the Act of Indemnity, which was intended to guarantee protection and reparation to ministers and deputies who might suffer any loss in the service of Holland, as well as to their widows and children. On the other hand, he gave satisfaction to the nobles, by obtaining for them the grant of certain prerogatives of judicial authority in their own domains. He interposed with equal solicitude to conciliate the rival pretensions of the towns, which were disputing for the right of being represented by their deputies on the various boards of the Confederation. The necessity for ensuring to the republic the means requisite for the common defence appeared to him no less imperative, and at his suggestion the States-General determined to compel those provinces who did not pay their subsidies to discharge their debt, even by

force, if necessary. No success was wanting to his policy when he had obtained the appointment as secretary of the Federal Council of the State of Govert van Slingelandt, who had distinguished himself by the success of his negotiations in Denmark and Sweden during the war in the North; this appointment was, in fact, a fresh guarantee of the supremacy of the States of Holland, who possessed another most faithful ally in Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General. Ruysch, De Witt, and Slingelandt, who had each in turn been pensionaries of Dordrecht, occupied henceforth the three most important posts in the republic, and their triumvirate made the States of Holland masters of the government of the Confederation. Prince William Frederick of Nassau, who alone might have disputed this domination, only sought their good graces and placed himself at their service.

Assured of the gratitude of his masters, the States, De Witt was able to regard the past with complacency and to look forward confidently to the future. 'Never,' writes a contemporary, 'have the States testified so much friendliness and satisfaction towards their Grand Pensionary as they did at their last adjournment, when the nobles and towns thanked him with extraordinary affection, so that whereas, formerly, there were towns which still spoke on behalf of the interests of the Prince of Orange, there is not one that does not speak to-day of the sovereignty and liberty of the province of Holland.'

He had just received the reward of his services in his reelection as Grand Pensionary, in July 1663, this being the second time that he had obtained the renewal of his commission. Six weeks later, having asked and received the authorisation of the Council of Dordrecht, John de Witt resumed the exercise of his ministry for another period of five years. The States hastened to grant him a fresh guarantee of indemnity and confirmed their promise of reserving for him, on the expiration of his functions, a seat in one of the courts of justice of the province, 'to which he looked as a safe and honourable retreat.' He had already, three years before, joined to his office that of superintendent or president of the Court of Fiefs

and keeper of the Great Seal, which had long been in the possession of the former Grand Pensionary, Cats, who had retained the emoluments, amounting to 3,000 florins, up to the time of his death. As it was necessary, in order to become superintendent of fiefs, to prove that he possessed landed property, De Witt made use of his wife's dowry to purchase four estates or lordships in the province of Holland, and thus obtained investiture of his new office.

The powers which he exercised had been of service to his family. In the year following his first appointment as Grand Pensionary, the post of *Ruard* or bailiff of Putten, one of the most important in the province, from the extent of the prerogatives that it carried with it, had been bestowed on his brother, Cornelius, sheriff of Dordrecht. Three years later, he obtained for his father, Jacob de Witt, the post of auditor-general for Holland. Unable himself to interpose on his behalf, he encouraged him to solicit the votes of the members of the States, pointed out to him with the most minute care those who he thought deserved his confidence, pressed him to write to them, or to call upon them, and thus traced out for him a complete programme of parliamentary canvassing.

De Witt, though disinterested on his own account, was anxious to be of use to his family. He hoped that his own authority might be strengthened by the satisfaction given them. Still, in spite of the reproaches which he may have incurred of being too well disposed to serve the interests of his relations and friends, the complaints of those whose demands he had been unable to comply with are an irrefutable proof of the limits he imposed upon himself. Thus his cousin, John de Sypesteyn, who solicited the command of a regiment, reproached him with 'showing too much timidity, and not giving himself trouble enough.' In his correspondence with his father, De Witt referred to the unjust accusations of nepotism that had been made against him and represented that, if he had incurred them, 'it was because some of his near relations and connections had been promoted to offices into which, however, they had not been thrust by force, but to which they attained with great ease, either through the support of other

friends, or else in consideration of their personal qualities and of their capability.'

However that may be, De Witt appeared necessarily the more accessible to considerations of relationship from the fact that he was on the most intimate terms with all the members of his family. Thus he repaired to Dordrecht to take part in the festivities on the occasion of the marriage of one of his nieces, the daughter of his eldest sister, Alide Beveren de Zwyndrecht, who had married Pompey de Meerdervoort. He continued to reside frequently with his wife at the country house of his uncle, Van Sypesteyn; he thanks him for his presents, and, in the formal style of the day, 'for the terrier dogs,' of which he had always been as great a lover as himself, and consults him with regard to buying a property in his neighbourhood. He kept up a constant correspondence with his brother Cornelius, and, having himself as yet no son, congratulated him on the birth of a second boy. 'I was happy to hear,' he says, 'that the addition you have got this time is of the favourable sex, by which the lack in our family will be supplied in a worthy manner.' His eldest sister, Johanna Beveren van Zwyndrecht, who had managed his establishment before his marriage, still continued to do so and employed herself with maternal solicitude in the selection of a nurse for his first child.

The death of his mother-in-law, whom he had lost shortly after his marriage, had not disturbed the close union which existed between John de Witt and his wife's family. 'I spent the season of Christmas,' he wrote, 'at Amsterdam, where I was more occupied in devotions and family meetings than in business.' He displayed sincere affection towards his two young sisters-in-law, who were not yet married, and often invited them to visit his wife. They were very fond of the pleasures suited to their age, if we may judge by the following letter which they wrote to De Witt: 'We cannot start for the Hague just yet, for we have a great deal to do while staying with our eldest sister Trip, and, first of all, to go to the fair of Amsterdam, which we have never missed; for you know that we like very much to be wherever there is anything

amusing going on.' One of them, Cornelia, married her paternal first cousin, Gerard Bicker van Swieten, son of Cornelius Bicker, who inherited his father's great possessions, and who had such habits of luxury that he drove in Amsterdam in a carriage and four. The other, the younger and prettier, Jacoba Bicker, married her maternal first cousin, De Graeff, son of Cornelius, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck. On the occasion of her marriage, John de Witt addressed a compliment in verse to each of the guests, thanking them for their kind reception of him and eulogising the young couple.

His wife's uncles were loyal advisers of the Grand Pensionary: they placed at the service of his policy the authority appertaining to them in the Council of Amsterdam, and De Witt never failed to consult them or to ask their co-operation in the direction of internal affairs or the conduct of the most important negotiations. Andrew de Graeff, burgomaster of the town, was re-elected seven times, and always showed himself worthy of the confidence of his fellow-citizens. Cornelius de Graeff, lord of Zuidpolsbroeck, the eldest of the family, a deputy councillor of Holland, who had been associated with John De Witt on several missions, had acquired the most varied information, joined to a profound knowledge of business. 'He may be described,' writes a contemporary to Cromwell's minister, Thurloe, 'as a man of whom Aristotle himself might learn the politics, being as much Orange party as good Hollander in making a *Misce, fiat potio*, whereof men do believe that he will give to drink to the said great pensionary.' De Graeff had earned the confidence of the republican party by bringing about the agreement between the town of Amsterdam and William II. after the coup d'état attempted by the last stadtholder; on the other hand, after the death of William II., he won the gratitude of his widow, the Princess Royal, by the friendly feelings which he displayed on the occasion of the domestic discords to which the guardianship of the young prince gave rise. Of the two sons of Cornelius de Graeff, Jacob and Peter, the youngest, Peter, who married the sister-in-law of the Grand Pensionary, Jacoba Bicker, was always united to him in the closest friendship,

and justified his confidence in the day of his disgrace and misfortunes.

The joys of paternity had completed the happiness of John de Witt's married life. His wife had already borne him three daughters, of whom the eldest, Anna, endowed with a precocious intellect, was always the object of her father's predilection. His wishes were fulfilled by the long hoped-for birth of a son, called John after his father. His uncle, Van Sypesteyn, who lived to the age of sixty-nine, congratulates him on the occasion with touching warmth: 'My dear nephew,' he writes, 'I cannot express with my pen how much the happy delivery of your beloved one has rejoiced my wife and myself: you would not believe it, though my tears of joy might be sufficient proof. I wish you, as well as the charming invalid, much happiness with your first-born son, praying you both, however, only to consider this charming doll as such, and not as an idol, as some parents do; for God does not wish us to make too much of His merciful gifts, and experience teaches us that such a course does not bring happiness on those who act thus. I end by wishing you both, as well as your new-born son, all sorts of happiness and blessings.'

Public affairs and domestic joys had not detached him from the studious tastes of his youth. Philosophy continued to find in him a faithful disciple. His correspondence with the pastor Andrew Colvins, one of his early instructors, shows the interest he took in the publication of Descartes' manuscripts. His favourite study was mathematics and in one of his letters he expresses the satisfaction which he had experienced from reading a treatise on the Differential and Integral Calculus; he congratulated Huyghens, with whom he liked to correspond, on the experiments which he had made at sea with some chronometers intended for long voyages, and suggested to him that he should demand a patent for them from the States-General. He worked out the most varied problems as a recreation, and applied his scientific calculations to useful objects. It was thus that he dis-

covered a means for reducing the number of weights used for different commercial purposes, and was the inventor of the chain shot which did such important service to the Dutch navy.

He had even published in Latin, under the title of 'Elements of Curved Lines,' a treatise he had no doubt commenced during the studious years of his youth, and which soon acquired a well-earned reputation. Francis van Schoten, professor of mathematics at the University of Leyden, with whose father he had resided during his stay at the university, published it, with several other scientific works, as a sequel to Descartes' 'Geometry,' edited by him. De Witt corrected the press with scrupulous exactness, profiting by the observations of the celebrated mathematician, Christian Huyghens, and by the assistance of Van Schoten, who revised the manuscript which was dedicated to him. He had divided his work into two parts.

In the first, which is a treatise on pure geometry, he treats of the parabola, the ellipse and the hyperbola, and shows, by an original and ingenious process, how these curves may be derived.

He deduces clearly the principal characteristic properties of each, points out the different methods by which each may be investigated, and proves their common origin from their common properties.

The second part, which is a treatise on analytical geometry, explains the method of determining the positions of geometrical points in a plane or in space. The author shows how the properties of a curve may be deduced from its equation, demonstrating that a simple equation represents a straight line and a quadratic a curved line, viz., a circle, a parabola, an ellipse or a hyperbola.

In a concluding chapter he investigates the general method for constructing, in a plane or in space, the figures which are represented by these equations.

But politics did not allow him to devote much time to science. He gave up to them even the little leisure left to

him by the exercise of his functions; and in order to defend, not only by words, but also with his pen, the government which he indefatigably served, he came forward as a public writer. His contribution to the work of Pierre Delacourt, entitled 'The Interests of Holland,' which has often exercised the sagacity of the bibliographical critic, gives positive proof of his opinions. Delacourt,[1] who was devoted to the republican party, to which, in spite of the trials of ill-fortune, he remained loyal till his death, had early developed a taste for examining into public affairs. At the age of twenty-three he had written, for the benefit of his native town, a pamphlet which was never published, entitled 'The Prosperity of the Town of Leyden.' Three years later he incorporated it in a more fully developed treatise, called 'The Interests of Holland.'

The fame of this book extended beyond the limits of the United Provinces. 'If you can find a volume entitled "The Interests of Holland," in which they say all the secrets of trade are contained,' wrote De Lionne to D'Estrades, 'you will oblige me by sending me a copy, and M. Colbert still more by sending him another.' This curiosity was justified by the importance of this study of political economy. The work was instructive on account of the commercial and financial information contained in it, and remarkable on account of the maxims of free trade that it professed. The author had added not only an inquiry into the alliances and diplomatic interests of Holland, but also an accurate estimate of the new form of government she had adopted, with a statement of the grievances which might be adduced against the stadtholdership. He had used it as an accusation brought by the city and commercial party in the towns of Holland against the power of the Princes of Orange. The Orange

[1] Delacourt, having been threatened in 1672 with sharing the fate of J. de Witt, on account of his notoriously favourable sentiment towards the Grand Pensionary, thought it prudent to withdraw himself. He repaired to Antwerp, where he found several of his compatriots, amongst others De Groot, his particular friend. He returned to Amsterdam at the end of the following year (1673), continued there his literary labours, and died in 1683, leaving behind him a posthumous work against the stadtholdership, entitled *Fables and Maxims*, which the editor calls in the epigraph *The Song of the Swan*.

party was moved; the refutation of 'The Interests of Holland' by one of its most able public writers, Parival, did not appear sufficient, and the Princess Dowager demanded that the court of justice of Holland should institute a prosecution, in order that the attacks which the author had ventured to make against the Princes of Orange should not go unpunished.

The Synod of Leyden had, on its side, taken proceedings against Delacourt's book, and ascribed to him a still more aggressive publication, the 'Political Speeches.' This was really the work of his brother, but had appeared anonymously, and Delacourt allowed it to be attributed to him. The Synod pronounced ecclesiastical censures upon him, forbidding him the sacrament; induced the burgomaster of Leyden to prohibit the booksellers of the town from selling his book; and appealed to the States to confirm the prohibition as well as the judicial condemnation. The States paid no attention to this denunciation; it was only seven years later that they followed it up. A new edition of the 'Interests of Holland' having appeared anonymously, under the title of 'Statement of the Principles and salutary Political Maxims of the Republic of Holland,' the States, who had at first, through the intervention of the Grand Pensionary, given their sanction to the work, withdrew it a few months later 'as having been surreptitiously obtained.' The author's theory of foreign alliances, as to which Delacourt cautioned Holland to be on her guard, appeared a dangerous one to sanction, and the States, who were in need of protectors abroad, were obliged to disavow the work. They even thought it right to prohibit it; but this prohibition was rather apparent than real and did not prevent the issue of a third edition three years later.

De Witt had not remained indifferent to nor unacquainted with this publication. His letters to Delacourt and to De Groot show that the author of the 'Interests of Holland' had requested the protection of the Grand Pensionary against the threats of judicial proceedings, and that De Witt, through the interposition of his friend De Groot, imparted to him observations and information on the new chapters destined for the second edition of the book. Other evidence gives

manifest proof of a still more direct participation. A contemporary relates that De Witt, having gone to Leyden to visit Delacourt at his brother-in-law's[1] house, found on his table, while awaiting his return, an unpublished pamphlet on the interests of Leyden, and that on perusing it he was so pleased with it that he begged the author to apply his learned researches to Holland. Delacourt, it is said, agreed to follow this advice, and communicated his new work to De Witt before having it printed.[2] De Witt is said to have taken advantage of this communication to revise the manuscript and to add to it two chapters. This statement is confirmed by the manuscript itself, as it was discovered: it bears traces of the revision of several passages corrected by the Grand Pensionary himself.

As regards the addition of the two chapters, if they were not written by his hand they are none the less his work; Delacourt has taken care to let it be known, by a note added to his manuscript, that they were to be ascribed to him. Moreover, in the preface to the second edition he expressly acknowledges himself to be indebted 'to very illustrious persons, so profoundly versed in the knowledge of everything relating to the affairs of the United Provinces and the government of Holland, that everything mentioned in these chapters passed through their hands.' He declares that 'the merit must be attributed to him who himself did what he talks about.' In conclusion, an examination of the manuscript makes it evident that one of the chapters written by Delacourt, and which was not published, is replaced in the work by two others that have been substituted for it: they are those numbered XXIX. and XXX., and entitled, 'Of the Reasons why Liberty has not brought with it more Advantages since the Death of the Prince of Orange.' 'Of the Good Fruits produced by the Beginnings of a Good Government.'

[1] The burgomaster Eleman.

[2] It is proved by authentic documents that Delacourt's manuscript was sent to J. de Witt on July 10, 1661. The manuscript has numerous corrections in J. de Witt's handwriting.

It was therefore under the cleverly chosen title of 'Memoirs of John de Witt' that there appeared in the next century a French translation of the second edition of the 'Interests of Holland,' although Delacourt's preface, retained at the commencement of the translation, contradicted its pretended origin. Moreover, certain portions of the book, in which Holland was asked to give up her interest in foreign affairs, by renouncing all part in foreign politics without concerning herself about alliances or treaties, are so manifestly opposed to the policy of the Grand Pensionary, which was always energetic, scrupulous, and far-sighted, as his correspondence shows, that this comparison would suffice to prevent the entire work being attributed to De Witt. On the other hand, the two chapters of which he was the author only sum up the maxims and opinions which constituted the programme of his public career. In one he stated the wrongs which might be imputed to the government of the stadtholders, whom he reproached with the useless prolongation of the war with Spain, the excess of military expenditure, the lowering of the naval power of the United Provinces, and their exclusive care for dynastic interests, which they set above those of the republic. In the other chapter, De Witt set forth the services rendered by the States of Holland since they had in some degree inherited the powers of the stadtholders. The titles to confidence that he put forward on their behalf were the reduction of interest and the diminution of the army, making it possible to reduce the taxes on food and to diminish the debt, which might be paid off within a period of thirty years. The peaceable solution of internal differences, the large increase of naval resources, and the pledges of security resulting from them, completed this defence.

In thus giving undoubted co-operation to Delacourt's work, De Witt was publishing the manifesto destined to justify the change of government. He had been anxious to bring into notice the reproaches addressed to the last stadtholders and the praises bestowed on the new holders of power. The patriotic satisfaction he displayed with regard to the work which had been already accomplished during his ministry

seemed fully justified. The party of which he was the leader had governed the republic for ten years, and in extolling the policy of Holland, after having gloriously directed it, the Grand Pensionary put forth that panegyric as a conqueror writes his bulletin of victory.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND ENGLISH WAR—A REPUBLIC VICTORIOUS OVER A MONARCHY.

Rivalry of England with the United Provinces—Charles II. and his court—Preludes to a rupture—English hostilities in Guinea—Useless attempts at conciliation—Reprisals by the States-General—Ruyter's expedition to Africa—It is prepared by the Grand Pensionary De Witt—Declaration of war—Relations of the republic with France—Request for assistance evaded by Louis XIV.—Financial measures—Maritime forces—First naval campaign—Defeat of the Dutch fleet—The flagship blown up—Death of Obdam—Ruyter admiral-in-chief—John de Witt with the fleet—He takes it out of the Texel—Dispersal by a storm—Vain attempt to renew the battle—Expedition of the Bishop of Münster against the United Provinces—Conquest of the province of Overyssel—Insufficiency of the land forces of the States—Cornelius de Witt sent to the army—Necessity for French assistance—Despatch of a French auxiliary corps—Little service done by it—Declaration of war by France against England—More apparent than real—Negotiations of the States with Denmark and the German princes—Quadruple alliance—Treaty of Cleves with the Bishop of Münster—Second naval campaign—The four days' battle—Retreat of the English fleet—A fresh engagement—Dispersal of the fleet of the States—Incursion of the enemy—The French squadron holds aloof—Firmness of John de Witt—He returns to the fleet—Internal troubles—Revival of the Orange party—Secret negotiations of Buat with the King of England—His trial and condemnation—Proposals for peace—Congress of Breda—Beverningh ambassador of the States—Delays in the Conferences—Renewal of hostilities—Expedition to Chatham—Destruction of the English navy—Cornelius de Witt with the squadron—Correspondence of the Grand Pensionary and his brother—Success of the negotiations—Treaty of Breda—Rewards offered to Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt—Honours paid to the Grand Pensionary.

THE policy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, which up to this time had been attended with constant success, was now to be submitted to severe trials, whence, however, it was destined to issue with triumph. Every precaution that might secure to the United Provinces the benefits of peace had been taken, and yet they were now to be called upon to support the

burden of war. The alliance with Charles II., which they had just concluded, and which seemed as if it ought to protect them against the ambition of Louis XIV., was but the prelude to a rupture. Within three years of the signature of the treaty between the two States, their fleets were again to dispute the dominion of the seas, and, having been formerly entertained by the States as their guest, the King of England was to become the enemy of those who had been the first to hail his restoration.

Once replaced on his throne, Charles II. had lost no time in throwing overboard all the interests of his kingdom, that he might be free to occupy himself with pleasures to which he sacrificed his duties as a sovereign. He might easily have realised the hopes of England, too happy to escape from the misfortunes of anarchy and the dangers of military government by the re-establishment of an hereditary monarchy. His good-humoured condescension had conciliated popular favour to him at once, and he had won all hearts by his readiness of access. He charmed all who were presented to him, and who might come without hindrance to see him dine, sup, dance, or play at dice, or to listen to him when he was pleased to relate his adventures. But these surface attractions could not compensate for the qualities in which he was deficient. He had been brought up in the school of misfortune, but his character had not been matured by the course of events; his mind was as fickle as his heart, and inconstancy in his attachments seemed as natural to him as infidelity in his alliances. He was insensible to glory and indifferent to flattery, but gave himself up to the most careless indolence, and was tenacious of power rather from love of repose than from desire to rule. The French system of government, by which Louis XIV. was free from all control, seemed to him the only form suitable for royalty, and the embarrassed condition of his finances made the dependence in which he was held by his parliament still more insupportable. He preferred to be ruled by his favourites, and had taken as his acknowledged mistress Lady Castlemaine, whom he afterwards created Duchess of Cleveland. Surrounded by

courtiers who laughed at all beliefs and ridiculed all virtues, he set the example, speedily followed, of every species of license, exhibited in broad daylight without restraint or reserve. Three years after the restoration, Brand, the envoy of the Elector of Brandenburg, writes to his master: 'There is frightful corruption in the English court; none but women are to be found there, and nothing but love affairs spoken of. The king does nothing but amuse himself with his mistresses, and the whole court is daily sinking deeper into contempt with the country.' The sensualist philosopher Hobbes, whom Saint-Evremont called the greatest genius of England, moulded public morality to his doctrines. Death or absence left many vacant places in the royal family round the throne. One of the king's brothers, the Duke of Gloucester, had been prematurely snatched away in the flower of youth from the affections of all Englishmen. One of his sisters, the Princess Mary, the mother of the young Prince of Orange, had returned to the old palace of Whitehall only to fall a victim to a brief illness. From his second sister, the Princess Henrietta, he was separated by her unhappy marriage with the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV. As to the queen-mother, Henrietta of France, Henry IV.'s daughter and Charles I.'s widow, whose courage and pious resignation had equalled her misfortunes, she had returned to end her days in her native country after a passing visit to her former kingdom. She lived in retirement in her country house of Colombes, near Paris; and, some months before her death, which occurred on August 3, 1669, was reduced to humiliating remonstrances to obtain from an ungrateful son the payment in full of her pension, of which she had been deprived of one-fourth. The new Queen of England, Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the King of Portugal, had no children, and was neglected by her husband. The king's brother, James, duke of York, stood alone on the steps of the throne. Notwithstanding the long-continued refusal of the queen-mother, he had married the daughter of the prime minister, the Earl of Clarendon, with whom he had carried on an intrigue during his exile, and who had a son by him.

He had acquired the confidence of Charles II. in spite of their total dissimilarity of character. His intellect was narrow and sluggish, his will obstinate; and his liking for business, so opposed to Charles's love of pleasure, completed the contrast between the two brothers. The royal prerogative was to him an article of faith, and he encouraged Charles in his ideas of absolute monarchy, while the sincere belief which determined him in later years to abjure Protestantism was in accordance with his political predilection for the Catholic religion, which, by enforcing submission to religious authority, seemed to him to secure the obedience of subjects to their sovereign.

The ministers were reduced to a secondary authority. The Marquis of Ormond, master of the king's household, who had been one of the last defenders of Charles I., the lord treasurer, the Earl of Southampton, the secretaries of state, Sir Edward Nicholas and Morris, even the Lord-General Monk himself, to whom Charles owed his crown, all gave way before the Lord Chancellor Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. He had been the faithful adviser of Charles II. in his exile, and now became, after the restoration, the first personage in the kingdom. But the credit which he owed to his long experience, and the recollection of his services, had lost rather than gained by the marriage of his daughter with the Duke of York. In spite of the apparent opposition offered by him, the royal family could not easily forgive his having become father-in-law to the heir to the throne. His high position, enhanced by this relationship, exposed him to envy. He had many detractors around the king who could not pardon his attachment to his duties, his devotion to the interests of the kingdom, or his resistance to the fancies and extravagances of the royalist party. His incorruptible honesty and his serious tastes left him to stand alone in the midst of a licentious court; while his political opinions, which admitted of no concessions, estranged from him the popular party. Having thus no support in his government, he was forced to follow the course of events instead of guiding them. After vainly attempting to dissuade Charles from coming to an understanding with France, by the sale of Dunkirk to Louis XIV., he reluctantly

allowed him to provoke a breach between England and the States-General without offering any resistance to this short-sighted policy.

The King of England believed it to be for his interest to wage war with the United Provinces. He not only cherished the secret hope of thus forcing Parliament to grant him the large subsidies that he needed, but he also counted upon gratifying the feelings of the English nation, which manifested an implacable jealousy of the prosperity of Dutch commerce. In thus setting England and the United Provinces against each other, he had also in view his family interests, and flattered himself that by a successful war he might force upon the States-General the re-establishment of his nephew the Prince of Orange. He took pride, besides, in the idea of humiliating a republic which had been the ally of Cromwell, and which gave offence to the Court of England by the rigorous observance of the Calvinistic form of worship, by the austerity of its morals and the freedom of its institutions. Charles had not awaited his return to his kingdom to give secret expression to his real sentiments, and at the very time when the States were giving him a solemn reception at the Hague, he was already proposing to show his gratitude by a long-premeditated rupture. According to Wicquefort, when he embarked in Holland to cross over to England, there were persons in his suite, and even among those most in his confidence, who had not feared to say to the friends of the House of Orange to whom they thought it safe to open their minds, that it was not to be supposed that the good things set before the king could reconcile him to those whom he would rather chastise than caress.

This animosity on Charles's part could not have been better served than by Downing, his minister at the Hague, who was never without expedients to conjure up and perpetuate differences. An article in the last treaty furnished him with the pretext he required to prelude the rupture by a war of pamphlets and legal disputes. This was the clause which permitted the owners of the English vessels, the 'Good Adventure' and the 'Good Hope,' to proceed with the lawsuit which

they had commenced.' This lawsuit, which had lasted twenty years, originated in the capture of these two vessels, whose owners had obtained damages from the India Company to the amount of 42,500 florins. But one of the parties interested, having declared that this sum had been improperly paid to the person who had previously made over to him his claims, and who had become insolvent and bankrupt, had brought an appeal before the sheriffs of Amsterdam. After long debate a compromise was proposed by De Witt, and seemed about to be successful, when Downing overthrew it, by professing to be able to obtain double the indemnity offered. In order to fix the sum at his own pleasure, he bought up the claim and transferred it to the English India Company for the sum of 850,000 florins, and then alleged that the case, being no longer one between private persons, ought to be moved into another court. He insisted that it should be taken out of the hands of the sheriffs of Amsterdam and submitted to commissioners from both nations. The States, foreseeing that if the case were once submitted to English commissioners agreement would become impossible, offered to call in the arbitration of foreign tribunals; but this offer was refused, and Downing accompanied the refusal with threatening expressions. The Grand Pensionary De Witt was not to be intimidated. He boldly exposed the subterfuges of the English envoy. Indignant at the audacity with which Downing affirmed that he had in his hands a letter which proved that the controversy concerning the two vessels in dispute ought to be decided as an affair of state, and not as a mere suit between private persons, he flung down his hat upon the table and challenged him to produce the letter, promising to give him satisfaction as soon as he had shown it. Downing attempted some vain excuses, saying that he would not give them the trouble of waiting. De Witt retorted that he might take his time in searching for the letter, and promised to hold himself in readiness to receive it until midnight. But Downing had no mind to profit by this proposal, and by evading it disclosed his imposture. The firmness of the Grand Pensionary had disconcerted him. De Witt declared afterwards 'that for his part he thought they

were a free state no longer if they should yield a point that they not only knew the English had no ground for, but were sure the English knew it as well as they.' 'It would be better,' he wrote to the Prince of Nassau, 'to resist to the last extremity, that that nation might not become still more insolent. According to the old saying, "He who too easily endures old affronts prepares for himself new ones."' The Court of England was quite ready to give up any such pretensions. 'What need,' asked Monk, 'to insist upon the restitution of the two ships?' The real question was quite another matter: the thing was that England should extend her commerce. 'Must that of Holland, then,' asked the envoy of the republic, 'be sacrificed to it? Commerce is surely a treasure which all men's labour does but increase.' 'Yes,' replied Monk, 'but at any cost our nation must have her share, or peace will not last long.'

It was in order to make the war popular that Charles II. had entered into a legal dispute unworthy of a great nation, but which was favoured by the English character. 'This country,' wrote the ambassador of the States in London, 'is full of fancies and wedded to all that it takes up, of an arrogant temper and, above all, obstinately contentious and taking a sort of pride in being so.' Unable, however, in this manner to give sufficient satisfaction to the national vain-glory, the King of England determined to provoke a violent outbreak of hostilities by seizing, without any declaration of war, those colonies of the republic which offered a formidable competition to the trade of his kingdom.

For half a century past the Dutch had been founding factories on the coast of Africa and in South America, which were now in a flourishing condition. Not thinking that any attacks from without were to be feared in time of peace, they had just recalled Ruyter's fleet, which had been cruising for the last two years in the Mediterranean, winning glory by its chastisement of the Barbary corsairs. While his ships were returning to the Dutch ports, four and twenty English vessels, under the command of Robert Holms, were despatched on an actually piratical expedition to Africa. Holms began by seizing eleven merchantmen which he met on his way; and then, at

the beginning of the year 1664, took possession of the island of Goree, of Cape Verde, and of most of the stations belonging to the States-General in these waters. Pursuing his course along the coast of Guinea, he continued his facile conquests, sullying them by massacres which marked in blood the progress of the English dominion. He next directed his course to North America, occupied the islands of Tobago, St. Eustace, and New Holland, which he re-named New York in honour of the King of England's brother. The English government pretended ignorance of these acts of violence, and, instead of disavowing them, put forward a claim to recover these possessions, by appealing on the one hand to a supposed gift of the King of Portugal of the territories on the coast of Guinea, and alleging on the other that the American lands had been formerly conceded by James I. to one of his subjects, the Earl of Stirling. Public opinion encouraged this offensive policy. On the opening of Parliament the House of Commons had presented an address to the king to urge upon him the necessity of protecting English commerce against foreign competition. When Parliament was prorogued, the Speaker, in returning thanks to the king, recommended to him the interests of his subjects, and the city of London lent him a million to fit out a fleet, the destination of which it was easy to foresee.

On receiving the first news of this violation of the rights of nations, the States-General made another effort at conciliating the King of England on a point which he had seemed to have at heart. In the preceding year Charles had expressed his displeasure with the States for not having sent to him any ambassador since the conclusion of the last treaty. He had forbidden his ministers to hold any intercourse with the secretary of the embassy, who had remained in London in the capacity of resident, and had informed him that he would receive no diplomatic communication excepting through his envoy at the Hague, Mr. Downing. To satisfy him, the States-General now urged upon Zealand, to whom belonged the selection of the English ambassador, to make the appointment so long delayed. The embassy, which had at first seemed

destined for Boreel, nephew of the ambassador in France, was given to Michael van Gogh, pensionary of Flushing, who had already, in company with Beverwaert, taken part in the negotiations for the last treaty with England. To secure him a favourable reception, the States-General, 'who had not much confidence in his very limited capacity,' sent with him Colonel Killigrew, who was of English origin, and the friend and kinsman of Monk.

Faithful to their pacific policy, they sought only to avoid the necessity of replying to the provocation offered to them. They had just sent Ruyter with twelve ships to the Mediterranean to exact the maintenance of the conditions of peace from the Algerian pirates by whom these had been violated. On his way, Ruyter met the English vice-admiral, Lawson, who was returning with seven sail from a cruise in the same waters. He fired a salute and dipped his flag, the English admiral returned the salute but did not dip his flag; Ruyter was indignant, and resolved in future not to dip his, alleging that he was not in British waters, and declared that he had verbal orders which authorised him to abstain from so doing. De Witt was informed of Ruyter's proposed conduct by De Mortaigne, the States commissioner with the fleet, and replied at once, in the name of the States of Holland, that the treaty must be strictly observed. He added that this salute by dipping the flag ought not to be limited to British waters, as that might be interpreted into subjection to the English dominion. He did not hesitate even to disavow Ruyter, and represented that an officer who was in the habit of receiving written orders could not be dispensed from a salute by any verbal directions; and in anticipation of the event of Admiral Lawson refusing a second time to dip his flag, he intimated that it would be sufficient to report the matter to the States.

The Grand Pensionary was resolved to neglect no precaution that might prevent a sudden rupture, and was meanwhile endeavouring to turn to some account the negotiations already commenced. Notwithstanding the inexperience of Van Gogh, De Witt had confidence in the effects of his diplomacy. 'We have heard with pleasure of your arrival,' he

writes to him, 'and we hope that you will have an opportunity of convincing the king and his minister of the injustice of their pretensions.' His wish for conciliation is equally apparent in the letter that he wrote to Boreel, the ambassador of the United Provinces in France: 'The States of Holland are of opinion that in order to have a conscience at ease before God and man in case matters should come to the last extremity, it is well to yield as far as possible whenever there are two sides to the question.'

But this wish for a good understanding did not make the Grand Pensionary of Holland lose sight of the imperative necessity for reparation. 'Without satisfaction for the attempt made in Guinea,' he wrote to Van Gogh, 'it would be impossible to expect peace.' This satisfaction was demanded in vain, and as Downing constantly evaded it by illusory promises, the States-General determined that they would not be attacked with impunity. They ordered the armament of twelve ships for the defence of Guinea, although Downing declared that their leaving harbour would be equivalent to a declaration of war. Even when this resolution was taken, it did not seem possible that it should be executed before the English fleet had received its sailing orders, in which case it might be beforehand with the Dutch squadron. De Witt undertook to hasten the projected expedition, and at the same time to keep it secret, that England might be unable to offer any opposition. Whatever obstacles he met with, the ingenuity of his mind and the strength of his character made him always discover expedients to ensure the prompt execution of his plans. 'So long as he believed,' wrote in after years the French ambassador at the Hague, 'that he could settle the English affair by means of negotiations, he took all possible pains to that end; but when he lost that hope, he took upon himself the dangerous responsibility of counselling the imposition of peace or making war on a great power.'

Ruyter's squadron, which had just been sent back to the Mediterranean to enforce upon the Dey of Algiers respect for treaties, might suffice for the defence of the colonies of the republic. He was lying off the coast of Spain, and was there

within reach of the African factories, to protect or reconquer them before the English fleet could come up with him. But Ruyter could only be charged with this mission with the consent of the States-General, and the temper of some of the members who had been gained over by Downing seemed to make almost inevitable the divulgence of the orders which they might give him. The Grand Pensionary kept the secret by means of a subterfuge.

A committee of seven members, of whom he was one, had been named to receive the report made by Ruyter of his expedition to the coast of Africa. This committee had knowledge of the proposition just made by the States of Holland to send Ruyter to Guinea with orders 'to retake all the forts seized by the English, and to destroy all ships which had done or should do any harm to the Dutch merchants.' This proposition having been approved and signed by the committee in the form of a resolution, the question was only how to obtain executive authority for it from the States-General. In order to obtain the consent of the Federal Assembly without its knowledge, the committee, by the advice of John de Witt, appended the resolution which they had drawn up to one taken two days previously, for the equipment of a new squadron, and which was to be read a second time. Ruysch, the secretary of the States-General, with whom De Witt was on the most intimate terms, was taken into their confidence; he was instructed to open the communication that he was to make to the Federal Assembly by the reports of Ruyter's expedition, and then to read rapidly the resolution attached to it, so as to create the belief that it referred only to the preceding matter. The members of the committee were careful also to keep away the deputies whom they mistrusted, and whose indiscretion was to be feared. Deputy Kann, of the province of Friesland, who had not acquired much knowledge of public affairs in his former practice as a surgeon, had just been summoned to the office of president for the week now beginning; he had not been present at the sitting in which the first resolution had been passed, and paid no attention to the second reading. One last formality remained to be accomplished, that of the signature.

According to the rules of the States-General, this was to be affixed by the president who was in the chair on the day when the vote was taken. The resolution for the fitting out of the squadron having been passed on the previous Saturday, it was the last week's president who had to sign it. In order to avoid any risk to the success of their manœuvre, the committee were careful to make no distinction between the two resolutions, and dated both alike, thus antedating by two days that just taken for despatching sailing orders to Ruyter. The president of the preceding week, John van Reede de Reuswoude, deputy of Guelders, unsuspiciously signed both papers among the mass of documents presented to him. The secret thus guarded by this parliamentary ruse was religiously kept by those acquainted with it. Notwithstanding his usual scrupulous respect for formalities, De Witt had eluded them, in the persuasion that he was only faithfully interpreting the opinion of the States-General by making the second resolution the necessary complement of the first.

The instructions prepared for Ruyter were sent to him confidentially by the members of the Amsterdam Admiralty, who had entire confidence in his discretion. He received them while at Malaga and prepared immediately to obey. He put the English fleet, now returning from Algiers, on a false scent, and not till he was in mid-ocean announced to his captains the expedition that he was about to undertake. The factories which the English had seized made no resistance to his attack. After surprising and taking the ships stationed at Goree, he forced the fort at Cape Verde to surrender. Sailing next to the Guinea coast, he retook the island of Sierra Leone, made himself master of the fortress of Tacorari, sailed up the river Gambia, attacked the fort of Cormantin and carried it by assault, leaving to the English only the fort of Cabo-Corso, which he could not take without the assistance of the natives, who remained faithful to their English alliance.

This daring enterprise was kept secret from the English Government long enough to delay the despatch of any reinforcements. Its confidence remained unshaken as long as the ships which were to be sent to Ruyter remained in harbour.

Some vague rumours, however, having raised suspicions, Downing received instructions to get to the bottom of the mystery which was beginning to cause uneasiness to his employers. Downing, who liked to have it thought that he ruled the whole republic, called upon the Grand Pensionary. Convinced of De Witt's rectitude, and knowing that he never deceived anyone, he did not hesitate to ask him if orders to proceed to Africa had been sent to Ruyter, and thought to confuse him by adding that he considered him too upright a man to utter a falsehood. According to a contemporary account, De Witt, who could never be taken at unawares, was not content with eluding his curiosity, but also, without departing from the truth, dispelled his suspicions while he flattered his vanity. 'You may be sure,' he said, 'that the States of Holland have given no orders which could give any uneasiness to the king your master. As to the States-General, it is not necessary for me to tell you what passes in that Assembly, since there is nothing done there in private that is not known to you, so that there is no need for me to inform you.' Downing, easily convinced by this answer, assured the English Government that matters were secure, and imparted to it his own presumptuous confidence.

Charles therefore still hoped to gain time, and so to take by surprise the United Provinces before they could assume the offensive. Accordingly, he would not yet openly break off all negotiations, though still continuing unyielding. He demanded, before laying down his arms, that he should be reimbursed the sums expended on the equipment of his fleet, and as the States-General were not disposed to grant him this satisfaction, he declared 'that not only would he send more ships to the Guinea coast, but that before six months were over he would begin war in Europe.'

When the news of Ruyter's expedition was received in London, the first feeling was one of stupefaction. 'It has caused such apprehension,' wrote the States ambassador, Van Gogh, 'that public opinion has turned against the war.' It was with this hope that the Grand Pensionary had hazarded so bold a stroke. In a private letter to this brother-in-law he

writes: 'When the English see that the republic maintains the motto of the Batavian lion, "Nemo me impune lacessit," they will perhaps return to more pacific sentiments.'

His expectation was, however, deceived. Fear soon gave place to anger. The King of England expressed such irritation that the secretary of state, Morris, said to Van Gogh: 'If your Excellency were not personally so much liked at court, I do not know how you would be received in future. The ministers summoned together in all haste declared unanimously that no further terms should be kept, and the Duke of York, who was passionately in favour of the war, offered to take command of the naval forces. Van Gogh, who up to this time had been too much inclined to accept in all good faith the advances made towards him, was no longer to be deceived; he even expressed some apprehension of 'plans which might be resorted to for the burning of the ships and magazines in Holland.' De Witt, persuaded at last, though unwillingly, of the uselessness of negotiations, acknowledged, as he now confessed, that it was impossible for him to believe in any accommodation being brought about. 'Concessions would serve now,' he wrote to the ambassador of the States, 'only to throw oil upon the flames.'

The English Government was too impatient to avenge the enterprises of Ruyter to wait for a declaration of war. A powerful fleet seized a merchant convoy of a hundred and thirty vessels laden with wine from Bordeaux. The Smyrna fleet, with its rich cargo, was also attacked; but it was escorted by some men-of-war which offered a gallant defence. After a sanguinary encounter, in which the commander of the escort was killed, the English were obliged to retire. They had to content themselves with the capture of two vessels while the rest of their coveted prey escaped them. It was easier to lay violent hands upon all the merchant ships which had unsuspectingly remained in the English harbours; their goods were seized and sold without scruple. Letters of marque were issued to all English subjects, while the States-General on their part, though they had recourse to privateers, were content to prohibit the entry of English goods, and offered no

reprisals to the confiscations from which their commerce suffered. The House of Commons, eager to encourage by liberality the policy of the Government, voted for the expenses of the navy two and a half millions, payable in twelve instalments, on the security of which the merchants of London advanced a million. Nothing was wanted to complete the rupture already begun but the declaration of war, hitherto delayed by the chancellor who continued to desire peace. In March 1665, the English Government published it, as if to comply with a neglected formality. In their proclamation they made known that they refused all guarantees with regard to neutrals, without exception in favour either of the country from which the goods were shipped, if they were carried under the Dutch flag, or of the flag under which they sailed if Dutch merchandise were carried in foreign vessels. It was not enough for Charles II. to destroy their fleets; he desired also to ruin their commerce. Thirteen years previously the States-General had waged against the head of the English republic a disastrous war which had imperilled their independence. They were now, on the morrow of the restoration of English royalty, to defend against the successor of Charles I. the freedom of the seas without which their republic could not exist.

The United Provinces had a right to expect protection from France against this new aggression, to oppose which they might appeal to the last treaty of defensive alliance that they had concluded with Louis XIV. In the hope of obtaining its prompt execution, Van Beuningen, the ambassador who had conducted the negotiations, was sent back to Paris on an extraordinary mission. But although the Court of France had long been displeased with Boreel, the ambassador in ordinary of the States, whose recall indeed had been asked for, the choice of Van Beuningen gave offence. The French ambassador, Count d'Estrades, recalled to the Grand Pensionary what De Witt had himself said to him concerning 'his difficult temper, his obstinate and headstrong character, and habit of subtle distinctions, so that he himself had difficulty in getting on with him although he was his best friend.' D'Estrades thought it would be better 'to leave him at home

to philosophise after his own tastes, and not to run the risk of sending him to a court formed of people who had a great dislike to any abrupt way of dealing with business. De Witt finally overcame these prejudices. He represented that the city of Amsterdam had the right of appointing the ambassador to France, and would be satisfied with no other choice. He made the most of the support given him by Van Beuningen in opposing the proposals of Spain in favour of a league between the Low Countries and the United Provinces, and protested that he had never ceased to be in favour of the French alliance. Van Beuningen declared also to D'Estrades that he had made the States promise that they would not oblige him to remain in France a single day after the king should have notified to him that his presence was not agreeable. The French ambassador allowed himself at last to be convinced. After delaying his departure for six months, Van Beuningen arrived at the court of Louis XIV., and met with a reception with which he declared himself satisfied.

The Dutch ambassador was commissioned to claim the fulfilment of the engagements by which the king of France was bound to furnish a force of 12,000 men to the States-General. But Louis had stipulated for a delay of four months before he should be required to take part in the war; and, besides, he had only promised assistance in case the States-General were not the aggressors, and should be attacked in Europe. The call made upon him might therefore be evaded by delays and disputes, which it was to his interest to take advantage of. He would have been glad to keep terms both with the United Provinces and with England, in order to prevent them from declaring in favour of Spain, whenever the death of Philip IV. should allow him to put forward his claims to the Low Countries. He could not conceal from himself, however, that if he abandoned the United Provinces they must fall under the dominion of the King of England, who would keep them in subjection, by re-establishing the authority of his nephew, the Prince of Orange, who would act as a sort of viceroy to Charles. But if he were to consent to

alienate England by assisting them, he wished, at any rate, to get some advantage in return for the help he gave. The intention of Louis XIV. was to obtain, as the price of his intervention, the recognition of the rights he claimed over the Spanish Netherlands. To this purpose, both at Paris and at the Hague, the most pressing advances were made by Lionne to Van Beuningen, and by D'Estrades to De Witt. 'Everything is thrown into confusion,' wrote Lionne to the Dutch ambasssador, 'by the bad policy of insisting upon a barrier between the United Provinces and France.' Meanwhile D'Estrades was commissioned to make the most to the Grand Pensionary of the interested advances of England, 'which offered to allow the King of France free action in all that he might desire towards this portion of the Spanish monarchy.' De Witt could not, however, bring himself to give up the point; he would not consent 'thus to re-open the question of the treaty of alliance which had been concluded with the French Government,' and from which he did not believe that Louis XIV., 'bound by his kingly word,' could free himself.

The King of France was obliged to recognise that 'this man could not give up his original idea,' and he could only console himself with the hope 'that some ill-success might befall the States, and reduce them to a more pliant condition.' Henceforth he resolved only to assist the United Provinces in case they should be reduced to the last extremity, and instead of troubling himself to avert the menaced war, he proposed to interfere, merely to increase its duration. The weakening of both belligerents seemed to him his best security for conquering the Low Countries. With this idea, Lionne was careful to leave the States ambassador a prey to ever-recurring perplexities, by opposing to his urgent demands formal objections and pretexts for adjournment. In order to prolong this state of uncertainty, Louis XIV. offered his mediation to the two governments, to whom he even proposed himself as arbitrator. But he took no steps to carry out his offer, and only despatched the extraordinary ambassadors whom he was sending to London on the very eve of hostilities, when the differences between the two countries could no longer offer any

hope of conciliation. These delays could not fail to throw doubts on the sincerity of the King of France. The suspicions of the States-General were the more justified, that 'his envoys acted as if their only instructions had been to gain the friendship of the King of England at the expense of the United Provinces.'

In other ways too, far from coming to their aid, the French Government rather took up an aggressive attitude towards them. A decree in council, suggested by Colbert, threatened with immediate seizure the Dutch vessels then in French harbours. This violent measure was resorted to by Louis to force the States to deliver up three ships of war purchased at Amsterdam by the French India Company. The States, on the other hand, contended that they had the right to retain them in their own ports, by reason of a general regulation forbidding the exit of vessels constructed for foreign powers, as the whole naval strength of the republic was needed for use against England. They contented themselves with offering pecuniary compensation for any damage that might result. The King of France imperiously repeated his demands, and after endeavouring to evade them by conciliatory offers, the States gave way, rather than leave him any pretext for displeasure.

De Witt was too far-sighted, and too well-informed by his diplomatic correspondence of the secret intentions of the French Government, not to have been troubled with well-grounded alarm. His fears increased when he heard that an envoy from Charles II. had arrived secretly in France, and had been received in private by Louis XIV. He was aware, however, of the necessity of concealing his suspicions. Two deputies from Haarlem and Dordrecht having produced letters which announced the good understanding between the two monarchs, he told them in presence of the Assembly that these letters were concocted by Downing, to keep alive the misunderstanding between France and the republic, and added that the King of France was the father of their nation, and that he would not abandon his children. He never ceased, moreover, to address remonstrances to the ambassador of Louis in language at once bold and conciliatory, in the hope of thus obtaining equit-

able conditions in an arrangement with England. But public opinion was not to be deceived by the double game played by French diplomacy. 'No doubt is felt,' wrote D'Estrades, 'that the delays which appear in your Majesty's inquiry as to which of the two nations was the aggressor, are an indication that your Majesty will give them no assistance, and will allow them to enter into the struggle with England so as to profit by their dismemberment. Such is the general talk in the assemblies, and in all society at the Hague.'

The States-General were obliged therefore to rely upon themselves. 'Although there is still some hope that the King of France may fulfil his obligations,' De Witt announced boldly to Van Beuningen, 'nevertheless their High Mightinesses take action as if they must act alone, and put their trust in the grace of God.' 'We have no resource now but in our arms,' he said to D'Estrades with proud resignation, 'and as remonstrances are of no avail, the States will wait until the King of France executes the treaty of his own accord.' Thus, at the moment when the republic which had formerly been allied both with France and England was attacked by Charles II., and had need more than ever of the alliance of Louis XIV., she seemed reduced to despair of any such aid.

The confidence of the Grand Pensionary was not shaken by this unlooked-for isolation. The preparations for war, to which he had given the most assiduous attention, had been carried on with vigour and forethought, unslackened by the scourge of the plague which was raging in the principal towns, and which in Amsterdam carried off fifteen hundred persons in one week. The States-General had devoted the utmost care to the maritime forces; they had ordered the construction of a large number of ships, and had enlisted more sailors. The land forces had been at the same time re-organised and augmented. The fear of a war with Charles obliged the States to disband the English and Scotch troops in their service. But they retained under the banners of the Republic those officers and soldiers who refused to return to their own country, and having required them to renew their oath of fidelity, they distributed them into three regiments commanded by colonels

in whom they had full reliance. This reduction in the foreign troops was compensated by new levies which enabled the effective strength of the companies to be raised, as well as the number of the regiments to be increased, and a body of marines was also formed of 6,900 picked soldiers. The army, which had formerly consisted of only 25,000 men, was thus raised to 32,000.

The States-General showed the same foresight in providing for the financial demands. They voted a sum of twenty-four tons of gold [1] for the expenses of the war, and laid a tax upon wine and vinegar solely for the construction of new ships. The province of Holland set an example of self-sacrifice. Of the twenty-four tons of gold, representing 2,400,000 florins, levied by the States-General from the seven provinces, Holland undertook to furnish fourteen (1,400,000 florins), and was undaunted by taxes or loans to meet the extraordinary expenses which she was called upon bear. Her revenue in ordinary times amounted to 6,836,445 florins, of which 1,336,445 florins was deducted for the boards of admiralty. To add to this the States of Holland re-established the income tax of a half per cent. which had been raised during the first war with England, and had immediately after it been reduced to a tenth; but there was difficulty in collecting it and it never produced more than 600,000 florins, which was not above half what had been anticipated. The tolls on roads and canals were also greatly increased, and produced more than 500,000 florins per annum, in consequence of the great number of passengers, which amounted to about 40,000 annually on the boats between Amsterdam and Haarlem. A new tax was levied upon ovens and chimneys which produced 300,000 florins. The land tax was doubled. The new demands thus made upon the taxpayers did not, however, suffice, although they were estimated at five and a half millions of florins. It was necessary to make use of funds which for the last ten years had been employed to pay off the debt, and nothwithstanding their honest repugnance to burdening the future, the States could not avoid the necessity of borrowing. A first loan of four millions was

[1] The ton of gold was worth 100,000 florins.

voted bearing interest at four per cent., and with contingent annuities of six per cent. Four months later a second loan of another million was added to this. The next year three more were raised; the first of a million, the second of 500,000 florins, the third of a million again. The English war thus increased the public debt by 8,000,000 florins. On all sides the appeal was responded to with the most patriotic zeal. The municipal governments all gave their consent; they pressed forward the collection of the taxes, and some even offered to advance the amounts. The receiver of Amsterdam declared that if a payment of 20,000,000 were demanded of him, 'he should receive them with no more delay than would be required to count them.' The magistrates of this city professed themselves ready to interrupt all commerce for a year, by drafting into the service of the State the 12,000 seamen and the numerous vessels employed in the mercantile marine. The public interest demanded the sacrifice of all private interests, and the demand was nobly complied with. De Witt was not content with encouraging the patriotic zeal exhibited by the States of Holland, so as to put the republic in a position to meet the charges of the war. He spared no exertion to obtain an equally ready response from the other provinces. The maritime states shared the ardour of Holland, and the States of Friesland, whom Downing had represented to Charles II. as not intending to contribute towards the cost of the war, had recourse to a loan to anticipate the payment of their quota. But the provinces which were not directly interested in naval affairs, amongst others Guelders and Overyssel, were less prompt in making their payments; and the Grand Pensionary of Holland was deputed by the States-General to represent to them the necessity of settling matters with the Confederation. 'Purses cannot be filled,' he said to the deputies of the States of Overyssel, in a speech that attracted notice at the time, 'nor are debts paid by words, but in sterling coin. Public business cannot be carried on without money, money forms the sinews of war, and their High Mightinesses have for this reason ordered us to see that this assembly responds to their demand with all due speed.'

When the war became more and more imminent, and the only uncertainty left was as to the day on which it might be declared, eight commissioners were sent from the States-General to superintend and hasten the departure of the fleet. They made a tour of the coasts, to put them in a state of defence by the despatch of garrisons, the construction of forts, and the establishment of entrenched batteries. They distributed arms to the peasants in all the villages along the coast, and found 30,000 of their inhabitants ready to oppose the landing of the enemy. They visited also the ports selected for the assembly of the squadrons, and appointed as a meeting-place for the whole fleet the roads of the Texel, to which they sent the deputies from the Admiralties. They settled with them all the arrangements for the embarkation of the troops, over which they themselves presided, going from ship to ship until nightfall. De Witt seemed to multiply himself in order to accomplish this task. He had acquired as complete a knowledge of naval affairs as if he had studied them from his infancy. 'He might be seen,' wrote Count d'Estrades, 'dressed in grey with gold buttons, his sword at his side, his cravat tied with a flame-coloured ribbon, and a cane in his hand (urging forward on the spot the equipment and despatch of the fleet), and never taking any rest. In truth,' adds the French ambassador with disdainful approval, 'though a lawyer by profession he is a man of courage and of great merit.'

The fleet at the disposal of the republic consisted of 103 line-of-battle ships, 11 fireships, and 12 galiots, besides 40 vessels intended to serve as a reserve squadron; it carried 4,800 guns, and was manned by 22,000 men. The captains appointed were worthy to command it. It was placed under the orders of Wassenaar Obdam, who had distinguished himself in the Northern war, and had been by common consent appointed lieutenant-admiral-general. In order to increase the number of general officers, the States of Holland created three appointments of lieutenant-admirals for each of their Admiralties. For the Admiralty of the Meuse they selected Cortenaar, who had like Obdam served with distinction in the Northern war; for the Admiralty of Amsterdam,

Ruyter, who had not yet returned from Guinea; and for the Admiralty of North Holland, Van Meppel, who had taken part under Ruyter in the expedition to Cape Verde. They were supported by three vice-admirals, Van Nès, Tromp, son of the former admiral of the republic, and Volkert Schram. The Friesland division was commanded by Stellingwerf and that of Zealand had for its intrepid commander John Evertz.

Seamen of such renown formed a splendid naval staff for the republic; the crews might well be proud to obey them. To encourage them in the performance of their duty, the States had not merely increased their rations, but had promised assistance and pensions to the wounded, and in case of death a double pension for the widows and children. Rewards were voted also for the capture of the enemy's ships, and a recompense of 25,000 florins to whoever should take the flagship; finally, large gratuities were reserved for the shipbuilders who had furnished vessels for the campaign. On the other hand, the surrender of a man-of-war was to be punishable by death, which was to be equally applicable to officers withdrawing from the battle without orders. Having thus put in action all the means at their disposal, the States-General appealed to the Divine protection for aid, and prayers were ordered to be offered in every province. On the suggestion of the States of Holland they were to be repeated weekly as long as the war lasted. 'Nothing,' wrote D'Estrades, 'can exceed the resolution of the chiefs, and of all the sailors and soldiers, nor yet their unanimity; they are so persuaded of the success of the struggle that greater cheerfulness was never seen, nor so great a desire to come to blows.'

The English fleet with which they were to measure their strength numbered 109 line-of-battle ships, 21 fireships, and 7 galiots, carried 4,192 guns, and was manned by 21,000 sailors. The Duke of York held the chief command, and had under him Prince Rupert, son of the former King of Bohemia and of Elizabeth, sister of Charles I., one of the most valiant champions of the royal cause against the parliamentary party, to whom he had made himself formidable both by land and sea. The other lieutenants of the Duke of York were

Vice-Admiral Montague, now Earl of Sandwich, and Rear-Admirals Lawson, Mings, and Ayscue, who had proved their courage and capacity in former wars. The superiority of the English fleet was mainly due to its good discipline. 'Nothing can surpass the splendid battle array of the English navy,' writes a contemporary who had witnessed the spectacle; 'their ships form the most perfectly straight line you can imagine, and they thus bring their whole broadsides to bear on those who approach them; the only way to get the better of them is to break their line and board them. They fight like a well-drilled body of cavalry which concentrates all its efforts on repelling the enemy, while the Dutch advance like a troop whose squadrons break their ranks and charge separately.' This unanimity of movement was to be the means of securing victory to the English fleet.

De Witt, confident in the superiority of numbers, was impatient for an engagement. By his direction anchor was weighed, notwithstanding the objections of the pilots, who under protest of danger in leaving the roadstead were desirous to keep the ships in harbour so as to retain for their wives the trade in provisions for the crews. The Grand Pensionary hoped, by commencing hostilities without delay, to baffle the intrigues of the Orange party. The sympathy shown by Obdam, as soon as he was named admiral, for the cause of the Prince of Orange, made him suspicious of so sudden a change of opinions. He feared that Obdam desired to remain within reach of the shore, in order to be ready to support a rising in the interior, which the Duke of York seemed to be counting upon, to judge from his intercepted correspondence. Not liking to leave him in full command of the fleet, he had proposed to go on board, but the friends and relations of the admiral had prevented the acceptance of his offer, and he was thenceforth more anxious to bring Obdam speedily face to face with the enemy, never doubting that, the struggle once begun, he would prove himself the loyal and trusty defender of the republic.

The States-General shared in the Grand Pensionary's hopes, though not in his suspicions; they believed themselves

secure of promptly concluding the naval campaign by a victory. They accordingly sent to Obdam the most pressing orders to assume the offensive. 'They had no doubt,' they wrote to him, 'that before receiving their letter he had already reached the English coast, or was within reach of the English fleet. In case this should not be so, however, they desired him to use all diligence to come up with the enemy without loss of time. But, having neglected to take advantage of the wind, which had been for two days in his favour, Obdam was now checked by the dead calm which detained him at the mouth of the Meuse, and he wrote to the States to request fresh instructions, informing them that the enemy had the wind in his favour. He received, however, orders to attack, under pain of being called to account for his conduct. He at once summoned a council of war, and the principal officers having voted for delay, he told them that although he shared their opinion he could not avoid obeying his orders, adding that he would only return to Holland covered with laurels or with cypress. The republic was to pay dearly for this precipitancy, imprudently encouraged by John de Witt.

At daybreak, Obdam weighed anchor and proceeded in search of the English fleet, and at four o'clock in the morning of Saturday, June 13, 1665, the battle commenced, ten miles off the coast of Suffolk opposite the little town of Lowestoft. The vanguard squadron, commanded by John Evertz, lieutenant-admiral of Zealand, and by Stellingwerf, lieutenant-admiral of Friesland, who was one of the first killed, soon gave way and spread disorder among the fleet. Meanwhile Cortenaar, the lieutenant-admiral of the Meuse Admiralty, who was to have taken the command in case of the death of Admiral Obdam, was killed by a round shot at the very beginning of the action, and his son fell at his side a victim to the same fate. Desiring to conceal so fatal a calamity, the master of his ship still kept his flag flying, while the crew yielding to a cowardly panic, seized the command of the vessel from their officers and let her drift away from the enemy. Part of the squadron of the Meuse at once obeyed the signal, and twelve or thirteen ships thus parting from the fleet left it open to attack.

Obdam, who could not foresee this sudden retreat, had made it still more dangerous by a daring manœuvre which only increased the confusion, and whose result proved utterly disastrous. In order to recover advantage of the wind, he had determined to break through the English line, resolved to set fire to the Duke of York's ship as soon as he should be alongside of her. 'Impelled by a passionate desire to engage with the enemy,' wrote De Witt afterwards, 'and being on board a fast sailing ship, he distanced all who were not so swift and who were making every effort to keep up with him, careless if he were followed or no, and at great risk of breaking his own line.'

His audacity almost succeeded. In company with the four best ships in the fleet, he opened a broadside on the Duke of York's vessel. The Duke, closely pressed, showed much personal gallantry, three officers of his staff being killed at his side. Vice-Admiral Lawson and Captain Smith hastened to his assistance and surrounded the Dutch flagship. Her powder magazine took fire, either from a shot or from the carelessness of the crew, and suddenly about three o'clock in the afternoon the ship blew up, exploding into a thousand pieces, while the hull went to the bottom, not one survivor remaining of the five hundred men who had been on board her, and amongst whom were many volunteers belonging to the first families in the United Provinces. While this disaster spread terror amongst the fleet of the republic, two Dutch ships ran into a third, and entangled their rigging so closely with her bowsprit, that two hundred sailors vainly endeavoured to free it with their axes; the English at once despatched a fireship which reduced all three to ashes. The battle was lost, but it was still continued with fury, and the defeat was made glorious by many brilliant exploits.

Lieutenant-Admiral John Evertz, to whom the chief command fell after the deaths of Obdam and Cortenaar, vainly attempted to stem the advance of the victors. He renewed the attack upon the Duke of York's ship, in the defence of which Vice-Admiral Lawson lost his life; but after sustaining the enemy's fire for more than twelve hours, and being no

longer able to keep afloat in a vessel that had been pierced by seventeen shots, he followed the instructions which had been given him for the re-assembling of the fleet, and turned his course towards the Meuse. Most of the captains followed him, although he had not hoisted the admiral's flag, being unable to resign himself to giving the signal to retire. Tromp remained alone with his squadron at his appointed post, although deserted by some of his crews, who mutinied against their captains, forced them to remain inactive under penalty of death, and even surrendered three ships to the English. With a small escort only he retired in good order, covering his retreat by a courageous defence, and resisting the enemy's vanguard until nightfall. He took the route which seemed to him the shortest, although it was the least secure, and arrived the next morning with ten or twelve ships at the Texel, where he found fifty more which had arrived before him.

The conqueror did not know how to profit by his victory, which might have enabled him to destroy the entire fleet of the Republic while it was still dispersed and at his mercy. The States-General had lost nineteen large ships, seven thousand men, of whom two thousand were prisoners, their admiral-in-chief, and three lieutenant-admirals, while the losses of the English were confined to four ships and fifteen hundred men. King Charles II. believing himself to be henceforward lord of the seas, caused a medal to be struck which attributed their empire to him, with these words as a motto: *Et pontus serviet* (the sea also shall obey him). An English nobleman who was then passing through the Hague, did not fear to assert that within two years the ocean would be closed to all Dutch shipping. Peter de Groot, pensionary of Amsterdam, replied only by appealing to the mysterious decrees of Providence. 'The change or ruin of States,' he said to him, 'is a work which depends solely on the will of God, and of which, as Sovereign of the world, He reserves to Himself the disposal.'

The misfortunes of the defeat were aggravated by popular tumults and by the feebleness of military ardour. The lieutenant-admiral, John Evertz, who had only abandoned the

struggle at the last extremity, after distinguishing himself by his indomitable valour, was none the less cruelly ill-used by the populace on his return. As soon as he landed at Brill he was insulted by a furious mob, thrown into one of the canals of the town, and would there have been stoned to death but for the assistance of two deputies of the States, who, happening to be on the spot, summoned the troops to extricate him. He was kept prisoner in a house close by, and guarded closely until he could be conveyed to the Hague at night under an escort. Here he was shut up in prison in order to give an appearance of satisfaction to the popular discontent, and the States-General, after examination, sent him for trial before the court-martial sitting at the Texel; but he offered so complete a vindication that his judges were forced to do justice to his conduct. Even the most intrepid shared in the general discouragement. Tromp resisted the injunctions of the three commissioners from the States, who had been sent to him with instructions to put to sea again with his remaining ships, for the protection of the coasts. He replied 'that he would not expose himself to the loss both of reputation and life in the company of a pack of cowards who had neither courage nor honour,' and he went so far as to threaten to send in his resignation. The sailors, on their side, as soon as they had got back to the Texel, rushed into the boats to go ashore, in spite of their officers, and were only kept on board by the promise of leave to each in turn every week.

The constancy of the States-General was not shaken, and De Witt lost no opportunity of strengthening it. 'I saw M. de Witt immediately after the battle,' wrote D'Estrades to Louis XIV. 'I found him as proud and collected as ever. He told me that he was going to the Texel, by order of the States, to recompense some and punish others, and hoped soon to be able to send the fleet to sea again, adding that they were determined to offer battle a second time.' His courage did not belie his words. On his way to the Texel he saw from the shore some vessels in flight, pursued by the enemy. According to his own account, he at once threw himself into a fishing-boat to overtake them, got on board one without troubling himself

about the leaks of which he was warned, and himself piloted them into port. He was impatient to direct a new naval campaign. He had formerly unwillingly relinquished the idea of accompanying the admiral on board ship, and the disaster to which Obdam had just fallen a victim did not deter him from seeking the post of danger as the most enviable privilege of his office.

The States of Holland had refused until now to consent to his departure, fearing that his absence would leave them without a leader. Even when he had induced them to give their consent he was very nearly obliged to renounce his intention. On the day of the sitting when his commission was to be given to him, he had withdrawn in order not to be obliged to read the resolution in his own praise. His kinsman, Vivien, pensionary of Dordrecht, who took his place as president of the debates, refused to put it to the vote, not choosing to be responsible for the danger which he foresaw, and De Witt was obliged to return to the hall, that he might himself put to the vote the authorisation which would allow him to expose his life in the service of the republic. The consent of the States-General seemed still more difficult to obtain. The deputies of Zealand and Groningen, jealous of the fresh powers that would thus be given to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, were persistent in their opposition. To win their favour, however, De Witt took care to request the appointment of two other commissioners, and this division of authority, which was more apparent than real, enabled him to perform his desired mission. He set out in company with John Boreel, burgomaster of Middleburgh and deputy of Zealand, and Rutger Huygens, deputy of Guelders, an old man of seventy-eight, who had offered himself, in spite of his great age, for this perilous service. The three commissioners, after taking an oath to the States-General, went on board, surrounded by a military retinue. Their staff included two colonels and two lieutenant-colonels, and they had for escort twelve halberdiers, besides a guard of ninety-two sailors; they represented the majesty of the republic, and in order to give full recognition of their authority over the fleet, the States had

put at their disposal the most imposing panoply of command. Their mission was to re-establish discipline. They began by summoning a court-martial to try the captains who had retired without orders, and who had thus contributed to the victory of the enemy. Three were executed and six degraded, while funeral honours were paid with all solemnity to those who had died in the performance of their duty. Two monuments were erected in the great church of the Hague, to perpetuate the memory of the services and the glorious death of Admiral Obdam and Lieutenant-Admiral Cortenaar. But it was not sufficient to punish the guilty and to pay honour to the dead; it was necessary to remedy the disaster by repairing the losses sustained by the United Provinces. The reserve funds were again employed for new armaments, and by a resolution of the States-General the Council of State was charged to apportion among the provinces the contingents towards the sum needed, which amounted to 450,000 florins.

The appointment of a new commander for the fleet was no less urgent. John Evertz, against whom the popular fury had been let loose, could not be chosen. Ruyter had not returned from his distant expedition. Among the rear-admirals Tromp was the only man who could replace Admiral Obdam. He was popular among the sailors, to whom his name was a recommendation, distinguished as it had been by his father in many victories, and his valour justified his renown; but, according to the judgment of a contemporary, 'he was known as a young man with more zeal than discretion;' and besides, his resistance towards the deputies of the States, the protection he had extended to the captains who were put on their trial and his hereditary attachment to the House of Orange, all made him an object of suspicion. The States of Holland, however, and their Grand Pensionary sacrificed their doubts to the necessities of defence. They appointed Tromp to be lieutenant-admiral of the Meuse Admiralty, in place of Cortenaar, and gave him the command of the fleet pending the nomination of an admiral-in-chief. Far from being content with this, Tromp did nothing but loudly complain of the choice of the commissioners sent to him by the States-General, to whose

authority he was by no means disposed to submit. He attributed their selection to De Witt, to whom he proposed, he said, 'to testify his displeasure by exposing him to such dangers as should cure him for ever of his mania for directing campaigns, and would make him repent having come on board his ship.' But the Grand Pensionary was indifferent to these marks of annoyance, and was preparing to lead Tromp to the assistance of the different flotillas returning from Smyrna, the Indies and America, when the news of Ruyter's return restored his confidence.

Ruyter, whose absence was a public calamity, after leaving the African coasts for America, to carry on in the Antilles his warfare against the English colonies, had just entered the Ems and anchored before the fort of Delfzil, three hours' distance from Groningen. He brought back with him nineteen vessels, of which twelve were line-of-battle ships, manned by two thousand sailors, with captures which flattered the national pride, and valuable cargoes which restored prosperity to the commerce of the United Provinces. There had been great anxiety for the fate of Ruyter and his squadron, and the exhibition of the national joy at their happy return was vehement in proportion. The States-General called upon the provincial States to desire thanksgivings to be offered. The inhabitants of Friesland and Groningen crowded the shore and put off in boats to the ship, where Ruyter received them with his usual cordial good humour. Women of the better class embraced him according to the custom of the country. He was received with rejoicings, as the predestined saviour of the republic.

The States of Holland were determined not to let slip the opportunity of using his popularity to insure the success of a new campaign. Even in the preceding month, before any news of the expedition had been received, several members of the Assembly had desired to appoint him admiral-in-chief. As soon as his arrival was announced, the proposal was renewed at the demand of the members for Amsterdam. The States of Holland hastened to follow suit by naming Ruyter lieutenant-admiral-general of the squadrons of their three boards. The same day the States-General offered him the

command-in-chief, under their three commissioners, who requested him to take up his office at once.

Anxious to assist the ships on their way home from the Indies, they did not wait for his arrival to take out the fleet which was bound by contrary winds in the Texel. The energetic determination of the Grand Pensionary of Holland surmounted the obstacles that were opposed to this bold move, and that seemed to make it foolhardy. Putting to use his knowledge of mathematics and relying also upon experiments which confirmed his preconceived ideas, De Witt found, in spite of the contrary opinion of the pilots of that coast, that of thirty-two different points of the compass from which the wind might blow, twenty-eight were favourable to the passage by three channels. He himself too went out to sound the shallows, of which the pilots warned him, and proved to them that, contrary to their allegations, the channel of the Spanjaarts Gat, a mile long, but on account of its breadth the safest, contained sufficient water for the passage of the fleet. Confident in his discovery, he gave the order for departure, and undertook the personal charge of the two largest ships. The others followed easily; and in remembrance of this sally, the Spanjaarts Gat was surnamed John de Witt's channel.

The Grand Pensionary was equally successful in overcoming another difficulty which remained to be conquered. The resolution taken by the States-General to appoint Ruyter commander-in-chief of the naval forces gave satisfaction to all the principal officers; but it offended Tromp, who could not resign himself to the second place, after having been until Ruyter's return in possession of the chief command. Unable to conceal his mortification, Tromp requested the commissioners of the States-General to excuse him from a second campaign 'in which it would be repugnant to him to serve.' They vainly endeavoured to bring him to a better frame of mind, and the States-General to whom they appealed, gave them full powers either to refuse or accept his resignation. The States of Holland on their side showed great displeasure at his conduct, and did not spare him their reproaches. Tromp did not venture to face the public indignation roused against

his personal pretensions, when the interests of the country required their sacrifice, and allowed himself to be gradually brought round. He began by remaining on board, and when Ruyter had rejoined the fleet at sea, he showed himself willing to retain his command. De Witt, who had restored him to his duties by gentleness and firmness combined, might congratulate himself on having thus prevented one of the best of the republic's servants from abandoning her service. The naval force so promptly made ready to put to sea again was divided into four squadrons; the first commanded by Ruyter, the second by Cornelius Evertz, brother of the former lieutenant-admiral, the third by Tromp, and the fourth by the lieutenant-admiral of Friesland, Heddes de Vries. The vice-admirals were Van Nès, Bankert, Van der Helst, and Koerden. Two colonels, Dolman and De Mauregnault, and two lieutenant-colonels, Van Ghent and Van Sauten, had the command of the troops, whose embarkation was watched by De Witt with the most active vigilance. The preparations had been vigorously pushed forward; 93 ships, 12 fireships, 20 galliots, 4,300 guns, and 20,000 men, composed the force assembled by the United Provinces for their defence.

No one could have been more worthy or more capable of command than Ruyter, and the United Provinces had in him the greatest admiral of the century to maintain the honour of their flag upon the ocean. He was born of working-people at Flushing. The son of a brewer's journeyman, he had been the architect of his own fortunes. He began to earn his livelihood by working in a rope-walk, and at eleven years of age went to sea as a cabin-boy. Four years later he transferred his services to the land forces and was sent into the Duchy of Cleves as a gunner under the orders of Prince Maurice. He then again returned to sea as an able-bodied seaman, and rose to being pilot. His first owners, doing justice to the experience he had gained in his distant voyages, sent him several times to Brazil and the Antilles in charge of a vessel which enabled him to trade on his own account. On his returning from these mercantile expeditions he was appointed by the Stadtholder Frederick Henry to the command

of a ship in the States navy, and the first naval combat in which he took part, in an expedition to the coast of Portugal, gave a fair sample of his intrepid courage.

He returned to the merchant navy, but was recalled to the service of the republic during the first war with England, by the States of the province of Zealand, of which he was a native, and the States-General gave him the command of one of their squadrons. After the death of Lieutenant-Admiral Tromp, he was raised to the dignity of Vice-Admiral of the Board of Amsterdam, which he had thought himself bound to accept in answer to the urgent appeals of John de Witt, and he had offered innumerable proofs since then of his untiring devotion. Since peace had been concluded with England, he had been successfully employed in putting down the Barbary pirates, by an unrelenting pursuit of them, and it was to him that the States had at once turned when they resolved to obtain from France, by beginning a system of reprisals, reparation for all the captures made from the mercantile marine of the United Provinces. His share in the northern war—which he had brought to an end by the blockade of the Swedish fleet—and the result of his last expedition to the Guinea Coast, pointed to him as the successor of Lieutenant-Admiral Obdam, he alone seeming to unite every claim to the command of the naval forces of the United Provinces as soon as it became vacant. Thus at forty-eight years of age he arrived at the summit of fortune, and might be said to have the whole fate of the republic committed to his hands, in being thus charged with the naval defence of its threatened independence. During ten successive years, he never failed in this task, and it was on board his own ship, at the moment of victory, that he ended a life that had been exposed in fifty-five engagements, of which fifteen were great battles, a life entirely consecrated to the service of his country.

He united in himself the qualities which make both the great commander and the great citizen. His intrepid courage, which never failed him amidst the most threatening dangers, was enhanced by his coolness and prudence; he had the gifts both of reflection and of decision, the two great virtues

of a commander. His long experience, acquired in his many voyages, and based upon profound knowledge of every portion of the seaman's art, assisted too by an unfailing memory, suggested to him every precaution that could ensure victory. He was inflexible in the maintenance of discipline, but won the love of his sailors by the fatherly interest he showed towards them, and inspired all who served under his orders with his own valiant confidence. He knew how to obey as well as how to command. Submissive to the States his sovereigns, he carried out their instructions with the most scrupulous fidelity, confining himself to the exercise of his powers as admiral, and never pretending to any share in politics. He sought in the privileges of his office no other satisfaction than that of the fulfilment of a great duty to his country. He had never solicited it, was incapable of any meanness for the sake of retaining it, and proved himself later on disposed to retire from it that he might remain true to those whose fortunes he desired to share. Such high qualities made him peculiarly fitted for the service of a republic, and justified the confiding friendship which never ceased to unite De Witt to Ruyter.

He had never been dazzled by grandeur. Averse from all flattery, he disliked luxury, and when not at sea cared only for family life. His simple habits were encouraged by a piety as sincere as it was tolerant. He attributed to God all his successes. 'I never,' says a contemporary, 'saw him other than himself, and when victory declared in his favour he always said: "It is given us by God."' He studied the Scriptures assiduously, and during his winter evenings on shore he used to read them to his wife and children as they sat round the family table. In the Divine services held daily on board he always led the chanting of the Psalms, 'taking much pleasure in singing,' as Brandt the historian naïvely tells us, 'both for the edification of those who listened and because he could sing well.'

His portraits represent him with all the external appearance of health and strength. Of medium height but good figure, with a broad forehead, a ruddy complexion, black and rather

prominent eyes full of fire, a thick, pointed moustache, his grave yet gentle countenance stamped with candour and honesty shows us the very type of a seaman, such as he appeared to the admiration of contemporaries and the respect of posterity.

De Witt was worthy to share with him the community of peril and glory. On the eve of the new campaign now about to commence, he determined to remain on board the fleet with the two other commissioners of the States. He had gone on board from doubts of the political fidelity and the military prudence of Tromp; but when Tromp was replaced in the chief command by Ruyter, who offered every security to the Grand Pensionary, his friends urgently advised him not to absent himself, in the fear that the Orange party might profit by his departure to resume possession of the government. De Witt however, opposed to them an immovable determination. 'He is preparing for the voyage,' writes one of the correspondents of the French Court, 'and so arranging his private affairs that death may have no fears for him, and that where the service of the State is concerned he may not have to consider his many children, who are all still young, nor the approaching confinement of his wife. He has but one anxiety, that of being unjustly suspected of desiring by absence to escape the resentment of his enemies and the hostility of the populace.' He himself wrote to Van Beuningen, November 19, 1664: 'I do not doubt that the rumours set afloat by the English and some other persons, that odious reasons of fear had induced me to embark on the States fleet, have died a natural death.'

The fate of his own person and of his authority seemed to him bound up with the safety of the State, which depended upon the success of the war. 'A second naval battle,' he wrote, 'will either strengthen or ruin at a blow both one and the other.' The motives which justified his conduct are expressed in the most noble sentiments in a private letter which he wrote to his sister-in-law, the wife of Cornelius de Witt, whose strength of character deserved the confidence he reposed in her. 'I have always supposed that you had so much

courage and strength of mind, that I could not expect from you such tender anxiety as you manifest at the end of your letter. My determination to take part in the expedition is based upon absolute necessity. Those who have not been eye-witnesses will perhaps refuse to believe that a naval force of some 20,000 men, commanded by officers who have studied their art from infancy, should contain no one capable of leading and directing it. There is urgent necessity to remedy this, and to endeavour to infuse new life, so to speak, into this force. To attain this object the presence of commissioners has been judged needful to guide the counsels of the leaders which might otherwise be contradictory, and restore confidence to the sailors by means of persuasion. It was necessary that choice should be made of a representative of the States-General whose influence would be sufficient to make his opinion preponderate. As most of the deputies of Holland have agreed upon this point it is only reasonable that near relations, whose too great affection prevents their seeing so clearly as indifferent persons, should submit to that decision and calm their excessive apprehensions. They must soothe themselves with the thought that if our Lord God will bless the undertaking the liberty of the country will be confirmed. With this object, we should without fear venture to hazard ourselves, our lives, our goods, and our blood, and if your fears can in any degree be allayed by my honest confidence, I can in all sincerity assure you that during my presence here no gloomy thought has ever harassed my mind.'

His patriotic self-devotion did not suffice to disarm his adversaries. 'I had some trouble to keep myself from laughing at the sight of a lawyer convinced that he can restore courage to panic-stricken people,' writes Count de Guiche in his Memoirs, 'and that with a smaller number of ships he can by his own merits win a battle against a victorious fleet in all respects superior to his own. There is in this a really uncommon excess of presumption.' Elsewhere the same writer continues: 'The Grand Pensionary caused it to be said by his agents that the Romans had taken men from the plough to command their armies. The most modest of his servitors

compared him to the Venetian nobles, and for his own part, he thought himself capable of any warlike deeds, and went so far as to change even his style of dress, and wear a doublet covered with gold lace and an embroidered sword-belt from which hung a long sword.' We recognise in this disdainful and mocking tone the feelings of the great noble and courtier who cannot forgive a mere citizen for usurping to a certain extent those military virtues of which the nobility claim the monopoly. It did not hinder De Witt from proving himself worthy to take his place in that choice company of the great men of Athens and of Rome whose lives belonged entirely to their country, and whose services shed such lustre over the republics of antiquity.

The Grand Pensionary justified his presence with the fleet by the promptitude with which he had it equipped and sent to sea. He was eager to send it to meet the ships returning from the East Indies, which had rallied round them all the merchant convoys of the Mediterranean. The loss of these sixty-seven vessels, with their cargo of a hundred-and-twenty tons of gold, would have been an irreparable disaster to the republic. They were forced to go out of their course to escape the enemy's cruisers, and were very near being surprised in the port of Bergen in Norway, the governor of which was vainly called upon to deliver them up. The English squadron attacked them here, but was repulsed by the guns from the town. Even then they would have had to pay the ransom of a hundred thousand crowns demanded by the governor, if the fleet from the Texel had not arrived in time to release them and serve as an escort. Their hopes of a safe return were in part destroyed by the storm which overtook them on September 8 and 9, 1665. The north-easterly gale blew with such fury that before it was possible to come up with the enemy the fleet of the States-General were scattered, notwithstanding the efforts of Ruyter and John de Witt to rally them. The Grand Pensionary was on board an old craft, and, careless of danger, he never left the tiller so long as the storm lasted, that he might direct the signals. But hardly forty vessels remained in position, and while the dispersed squadron slowly

collected again, the English fleet had drawn off, content with the prizes they had picked up during the gale; five line-of-battle ships and seven merchantmen, of which three India ships were valued at four millions, had fallen into their hands. Fresh losses thus unhappily took the place of the hoped-for victory.

The Grand Pensionary opposed an unalterable serenity of mind to all the assaults of an adverse fortune; he humbled himself before the shock of calamity, but he was not discouraged. His report to the States-General of the disasters they had sustained was as follows:—'We know that people will cry out at pain; and we accordingly foresee that we shall not be exempt from calumnies and unjust accusations, but we must hope that their High Mightinesses, considering all that we have done, may take into account that this is really a fatality which has come upon us from the hand of God, and that there has been no negligence on our part. It pleased God to make use of the wind, that inconstant element, to disperse our fleet, in such manner that we can only say what is always in our hearts—man proposes but God disposes. We hope, however, that this same God will give proofs of His mercy and of His goodwill to this nation in some other encounter of greater importance, and He will thus show that if He strikes with one hand He heals with the other according to His good pleasure.'

Thus supported by his patriotism and by his Christian faith, De Witt had no other thought than that of making new efforts to force an engagement which should allow the republic to make some profit from her naval forces. It having been proposed that the ships should be recalled into harbour and dismantled on account of the already advanced season, he wrote thus to Vivien, the pensionary of Dordrecht, who had taken his place in the assembly of the States of Holland: 'I think that if it had pleased God to bring safely into harbour the men-of-war and the India ships, the States might without prejudice to the public welfare, and without compromising its own reputation, resolve to dismantle them. But since the Providence of God has ordered matters otherwise, I am

of opinion that it will be more advantageous, and more honourable to the States, to make another effort before the English have had time to reinforce their fleet, by means of the riches they have taken from the subjects of the States and the men-of-war they have captured. My advice is consequently that we should put to sea at once, to look for them again, and I think that with so fine a naval force, there is everything to be hoped for by God's blessing.'

His advice was adopted by the States. The fleet, which had reassembled at Goeree, received orders to sail for England. Unable, by reason of contrary winds, to attempt an attack on the fireships and the men-of-war at anchor in the Downs, it proceeded to blockade the mouth of the Thames. The Grand Pensionary on his galliot made a careful exploration of the river, which he turned to account two years later, to insure the glorious success of a new campaign. Sixty of the enemy's ships were at anchor in the river, and according to the most probable expectations would endeavour to force their way out at any price, so as to reopen the Thames for navigation; but the suppositions of the Grand Pensionary were overthrown by their inaction. Attacked by the plague which was decimating London, the English fleet had suffered too much to venture upon a battle; and that of the States, after vainly defying it, was forced by sickness and bad weather to return to harbour. De Witt and his two colleagues sent in their report to the States-General and received solemn thanks in return. On the same day the Grand Pensionary gave an account of his mission to the States of Holland, who had already sent him encouraging messages, and who renewed to him the assurance of their satisfaction. The most flattering praise that he received was that of Ruyter. When the admiral who shared John de Witt's title to the public gratitude appeared in turn at the bar of the two assemblies, to be congratulated upon his services, he declared 'that in all the deliberations of the councils of war in which the Grand Pensionary had taken part, he had always received from him the most useful aid, and that he cordially acknowledged his rare sagacity.' He made a point also of openly showing the attachment he professed for him, by

passing in his house the time of his sojourn at the Hague. De Witt might well glory in the witness to his conduct offered by such a judge. Content with having satisfied his employers, he refused all recompense, declaring 'that he had not undertaken his expedition with a view to receiving presents, but to acquit himself of his duty, and to serve his beloved country, for which he was always ready to make any sacrifice.' By taking the fleet to sea again, in spite of defeats and storms, De Witt had retrieved the honour of the flag, and strengthened public confidence. And he did justice to himself when he wrote to Van Beuningen: 'Although it has not pleased Heaven to bestow every blessing that we could have wished upon the employment of the fleet, I am, nevertheless, persuaded that my presence was not useless, especially in preventing its return in disorder and short of provisions after having been defeated and dispersed by the storm.' If it had not been able to regain the victory, it had at least repaired the humiliation of defeat.

While the republic was thus struggling with the formidable trials of a maritime war that exhausted her resources, she was still more dangerously menaced in her independence by the aggression of one of her neighbours, the Bishop of Münster. By allying himself with him to attack the United Provinces, Charles II. had created a diversion which might put them at his mercy.

Bernard Van Galen, Bishop of Münster, who ruled his states for twenty-eight years, dying at the age of 71, in 1678, continued in the middle of the seventeenth century the traditions of the warrior-prelates of the Middle Ages. In times of peace, he fulfilled with regularity the duties of his ecclesiastical office, and administered his diocese with paternal care, proving himself, according to Johannes ab Alpen, one of his former ministers and his biographer, an equitable, humane, affable, and merciful prince. But having passed his youth in the military service of the Elector of Cologne, he had never renounced his first vocation, and seemed better fitted to bear a sword than a crosier. As soon as he found himself in the field, he resumed the manners of the

camp, and passed a portion of his days in joyous banqueting. Joining to the resources of a singularly subtle mind an obstinate determination of character, he was always ready to parade the turbulent ambition which made him a stranger to all scruple. Full of confidence in himself, he wished, he said, to make plenty of noise in the world before leaving it, and declared that if he ever came to lose his states, he should not think himself in any the worse condition, having money enough in the bank at Venice to buy a cardinal's hat.

It was at the expense of the United Provinces that he proposed to increase his principality. The States-General had repeatedly provoked his resentment, without having been able to reduce him to the impossibility of harming them. Eight years before they had undertaken to assist the town of Münster, which refused to acknowledge his authority and claimed the privileges of a free city. On the energetic representations of John de Witt, they had assembled a body of troops consisting of about 7,000 men, whose despatch was held in suspense by the opposition of Amsterdam, while the bishop, warned in time, pressed forward the conclusion of an agreement which made all preparations for intervention unnecessary. New disputes had given him pretexts for complaint. The States refused to recognise his pretensions to the lordship of Borkelo, which belonged to the province of Guelders. They had besides taken part against him in favour of George Christian, Prince of East Friesland, within whose territories they occupied the strongholds of Liroort and Emden, as advanced posts to the town of Groningen. The Bishop of Münster having taken possession of the town of Deyl, or Eydeler, in this principality, which secured him free access to the United Provinces, they gave the command of an expedition to Prince William Frederick of Nassau, who easily succeeded in retaking it.

The following year the bishop signed the preliminaries of a secret treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Charles II. As soon as he had received the considerable subsidies promised to him, he sent to demand from the States-General reparation for the injuries of which he complained

and, without waiting for the return of his envoy from the Hague, gave orders to his troops to invade the territory of the United Provinces.

He had mustered, in the course of two months, 8,000 horse and nearly 5,000 foot, with a considerable body of artillery. Further reinforcements soon raised his army to 18,000 men. He sought to ensure success by the rapidity of his attack. A few weeks sufficed to put him in possession of the county of Zutphen, and of a part of the province of Overyssel. With the exception of the fortress of Borkelo, which held out for some days under the command of an ensign named Eck, all the towns surrendered before any measures could be taken to assist them. The States had reason to fear that the enemy's army might hasten its march without meeting with any obstacle. But it divided into two detachments, and the vigour of the attack was thus diminished. Confiding in the hopes held out to him by Schulemburg, a former deputy of the States of Groningen, who had recently been condemned as a traitor after some political disturbances which had occurred in the province, and persuaded that Schulemburg would cause the gates of Groningen to be opened to him, the bishop sent a part of his forces in the direction of that town. He hoped to surprise the fortress of Delfzyl with the help of a descent by the English, and thus to complete the rapid success of his expedition. 'The Batavian lion, it was said, was allowing itself to be defeated by a sheep, when one stroke of a paw was all that was needed to ensure success.'

The military forces which the States could oppose to the invasion were insufficient. Their army had been imprudently reduced to 24,000 men; the new levies which they had decreed had not yet been completed; their best soldiers, to the number of about 7,000, formed part of the marine forces with the fleet, and they had hardly more than 6,000 men to put into the field. Besides, the fortifications of the frontier towns had not been repaired, the magazines and arsenals were empty, and finally, the suppression of a great number of commissions and the vacancy in the chief command had disorganised the army. The States-General had not contented themselves

with leaving the companies without lieutenants, refusing all new appointments; they had not even replaced Major-General Brederode, who had now been dead ten years, the States of Holland having refused to allow a successor to him to be named. Cavalry, artillery, and infantry, henceforth were under the orders of chiefs who were no longer dependent upon any military authority, and who were themselves reduced to an inferior position. All military powers had been vested in the Council of State. 'They are so jealous of their authority and of their title of sovereign,' wrote D'Estrades, 'that they appear to prefer to sustain very considerable damage, and themselves perform the part of commander-in-chief, rather than allow those to act who are capable of doing so. The States of Holland had too easily sacrificed to their political fears the imperious necessities of defence. De Witt recognised the danger, and spoke of it in the following terms: 'The bad opinion entertained of the land forces of this State is not without foundation, and I own to you that to my mind it cannot be employed in great operations; but if the projects that I have made to remedy these evils can be put into execution, I do not doubt of success in restoring it to a satisfactory condition.'

To repair former errors it was necessary at least to proceed without delay to the choice of a commander-in-chief. William Frederick of Nassau, stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, and grand master of the artillery, who had commanded the last expedition against the Bishop of Münster, was dead. Louis of Nassau, Lord of Beverwaert, chief of the staff, who possessed the confidence of the States of Holland, followed him to the grave a few months later. There remained for choice only two general officers, the Rhyngrave Frederick Magnus of Salm, governor of Maestricht, commissary-general of cavalry; and Prince John Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, formerly governor of Brazil, stadtholder of Cleves for the Elector of Brandenburg, commandant of Wesel, and lieutenant-general of cavalry.

The States of Holland were suspicious of the latter both in his engagements with the Elector and his relationship to the

House of Orange, and also objected to his great age. They would have liked to put forward the Prince of Tarentum, colonel of a regiment of horse, whom they had just appointed governor of Bois-le-Duc. But the other provinces had all declared in favour of Prince John Maurice, whose long services they desired to recompense, and they refused to allow the House of Orange to be deprived of the command of the troops. The States of Holland, driven by necessity, gave their consent, but required that the powers entrusted to the Prince should be limited to the duration of the expedition. He entered upon his office at once, with a salary of 2,400 crowns annually for his equipage and of twelve florins a week for his table. The Rhyngrave had the command of the cavalry. 'The honour done to me,' he wrote to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, 'is due only to you and your good counsel, to which I shall be indebted all my life. I hope with God's help I shall acquit myself worthily, and that you will never be ashamed of having recommended him who is till death your very humble and very faithful servant.'

The States-General, making use of the powers which belonged to them, sent five deputies from their assembly to represent them at headquarters, and John de Witt, being unable to accompany them on account of his mission to the fleet, took care that his brother, Cornelius de Witt, councillor deputy of Holland, should be appointed as one of the commissioners. The attacks upon them, to which Count de Guiche has given free vent in his Memoirs, show plainly a fixed intention in his haughty disparagement of the representatives of civil power thus transformed into military delegates. His usual one-sidedness surpasses even itself in the account which represents Cornelius de Witt 'led into the trenches by the Prince of Nassau, who exposed him to the fire of the guns while conversing with the most perfect coolness, whereas the former suddenly left his company, and so made the lookers-on laugh greatly.' The proofs of intrepid valour by which Cornelius de Witt distinguished himself in his naval campaigns, and which are testified to by all his contemporaries, take away all sting from such audacious accusations.

The States took measures, though tardily, to supply the deficiencies of their defensive preparations. The new levies which they had ordered were raised and reinforced by 6,000 waartgelders or militia, enrolled by the States of Overyssel. The guns of the towns were sent into camp. Steps were taken for repairing the fortresses and supplying the arsenals. The States of Holland had besides, in the month of July, proposed to the States-General to subsidise for the service of the republic the troops offered to them by the princes of the house of Brunswick-Luneburg—George William, Duke of Zell, and his brother Ernest Augustus, Bishop of Osnabruck. The conditions of this agreement were arranged with the States-General through the means of their envoy Count Waldeck, who had served the States as a captain of horse, and who, 'having a high opinion of himself,' flattered himself that he might one day receive the command of the military forces of the republic. For the sum of 140,000 florins down, and subsidies of 11,112 florins per month, a contingent of twelve thousand men was promised.

But the money to obtain this was wanting. Preparations for the new naval campaign absorbed the already strained resources. Zealand, whose maritime trade was ruined by the war, found it impossible to pay her financial quota. Guelders, Overyssel, and the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, overrun and devastated by the Bishop of Münster's army, were reduced to straits which brought them to the very verge of insolvency. Holland, obliged to support almost unaided the burden of taxes and loans, 'could not,' wrote D'Estrades, 'continue for a year thus weighted, without bringing about a revolution that would change the government. If in such a conjuncture one or two towns should declare that they would contribute no longer towards the financial burdens, we might look for changes, since they would inevitably be upheld by members of the States who were known to be unfriendly to M. de Witt.' 'The State is so overburdened with expenses,' the Grand Pensionary himself confesses, 'that we cannot meet them, however much we may promise; it is to be feared that some of the troops newly levied may desert for want of pay. The

same thing is to be feared for the Luxemburg forces.' The United Provinces were therefore placed under the impossibility of providing for their defence themselves.

In this situation the republic could not dispense with the aid of France, which had been assured to her by the last treaty of alliance, according to which 12,000 men were to be furnished to the States in case they were attacked. Up to this time Louis XIV. had been procrastinating, notwithstanding the urgent representations of Van Beuningen, the ambassador of the United Provinces in Paris. He had contented himself with renewing his proposals of peace in London, and with threatening the Bishop of Münster with his intervention. But the death of the King of Spain, which he had been long awaiting, imposed upon him the necessity of showing some consideration for the United Provinces, in order to deter them from an alliance with England, which might put obstacles in the way of the execution of his projects with regard to the Spanish Netherlands. De Witt had skilfully contrived to rouse the French king's fears of such a reconciliation, by causing negotiations to be resumed by Van Gogh, the ambassador of the States, who had remained in London. 'I have declared to Count D'Estrades,' he wrote to Van Beuningen, 'that if the king does not speedily put matters straight, I shall be able no longer to find fault with those who believe that we should purchase peace with England at any price.'

Interested in the prolongation of the war so that the United Provinces and England, by remaining in hostility, should leave Spain open to his attack, Louis XIV. readily recognised that he could not avoid assisting the republic, in order to re-establish the equilibrium between the belligerent powers. But, unwilling to depart more than was necessary from a system of neutrality so advantageous to his interests, he contented himself with intervening merely against the Bishop of Münster, thus limiting the assistance which he gave to the States and taking care besides to render it more apparent than real.

A body of 6,000 men was sent into the field, under the command of Lieutenant-General Pradel, governor of Bapaume.

He marched by short stages along the frontiers of the Spanish Netherlands as far as Maestricht, where he was received by the deputies of the States. The hopes of co-operation which this intervention might have raised in the republic soon vanished one after another. The French cavalry, which included two companies of the king's musqueteers, was indeed a picked body; but the infantry, consisting of 4,000 men, was a mere military mob. They were as badly armed as they were ill-clothed, and the States-General was obliged to buy for them '4,000 pairs of shoes and 4,000 pairs of stockings.' Discipline was equally wanting. According to the report of the commissary of the army the musqueteers themselves, though belonging to the aristocracy of the kingdom, set the example of disorder and violence. Convoys pillaged and their drivers ill-used, cattle carried off, houses burnt, the exercise of the Calvinist form of worship insulted: such were the traces left by the passage of the French soldiers. 'They paid nothing as they passed, or false money,' writes Sir William Temple to the English Government, 'took the best treatment the Dutch could make them with scorn and insolence, and drank his Majesty's and the Prince of Münster's health in the market-place at Maestricht; a strain, I suppose, of their extravagance, rather than good meaning.' They behaved in an ally's country as they would have done in an enemy's. The junction of the French auxiliary corps with the troops of the republic at Arnheim only made the disappointment more complete. The mistakes made by the bishop seemed, however, as if they must ensure the speedy success of the campaign and allow the time lost to be retrieved. The attempt of his lieutenant, D'Ossery, against Groningen had failed. Protected against all surprise by a garrison of 4,000 men, the town had valiantly defended itself. The Princess of Nassau, Albertina Agnes, widow of William Frederick, the last stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, had shut herself up here with her young son, Henry Casimir, to encourage the resistance of the inhabitants. The detachment of the episcopal army which had advanced to the attack of the town allowed its communications to be cut with the main force which had

invaded Overyssel. Fearing to be surrounded, D'Ossery entrenched himself in a strong position at Winschoten, near the mouth of the river Ems. In order to release him, the bishop moved to Meppen and employed four or five thousand peasants to construct across the swamps a dyke two leagues in length, which was finished in six weeks, and bears his name to this day.

To destroy this vanguard of the bishop's army it was only necessary to attack it before it could be reinforced. But the 15,000 men whom the arrival of the French troops permitted to be used against him, and who might easily have been marched across the enemy's country in the absence of his army, remained inactive. The French commander, Pradel, no doubt in obedience to secret instructions given him by Louis XIV., alleged the insufficiency of his camp equipment and the lateness of the season, in opposition to the continuance of the expedition, and required that the troops should be dismissed to their winter quarters. His resistance only increased the indecision of Prince John Maurice, who 'from weakness and too easy compliance,' writes John de Witt, 'did not get beyond deliberations.'

The States commissioners, after vainly reiterating their complaints and remonstrances for three weeks, finally obtained orders that the allied forces should quit their cantonments and should be marched to the further side of the Yssel. But the dilatoriness of their movements, increased by the bad state of the roads, rendered the expedition useless. The sole result of the campaign for the States-General was the submission of the little town of Lockhein, which was only defended by 400 foot-soldiers, and which capitulated, once the trenches were opened, after three days' resistance. To secure Pradel's consent to this operation, Prince John Maurice went so far as to assure him that the States would be content with this proof of his complaisance. Pradel, accordingly, insisting upon the want of forage, imperiously demanded that the order for retreat should be given, and the commissioners of the States were obliged to withdraw the army, while the bishop's cavalry scoured the neighbourhood unmolested.

The expedition was postponed until after the winter, and the troops returned to their garrison. The invasion had hardly been checked, and instead of being freed from it the States-General had reason to fear that it would soon resume its course. The deputies hastened to report the result of their mission to the States-General, and Prince John Maurice was also called upon to give an account of his campaign. In his report, which was drawn up carefully, he haughtily repelled the reproaches addressed to him, appealing for his justification to the judgment of his officers, and blaming the improvidence of the States with regard to the military stores. The States of Holland and their Grand Pensionary did not conceal from him their dissatisfaction ; but the other provinces insisted that the command should be continued to him, and even obtained for him a vote of thanks.

Instead of drawing closer the good relations between France and the republic, this campaign had displeased and disquieted the United Provinces. The States had been brought to desire the recall of the French troops as impatiently as they had looked for their arrival. The correspondence of Count D'Estrades explains only too well the fears their presence excited, when it is seen that he proposed to Louis XIV. to profit by their presence, in order to secure the provinces of Friesland and Groningen by seizing the stronghold of Coeverden. 'It would thus be possible,' he wrote, foreseeing the opposition that the States would make to the projects of the King of France against the Spanish Netherlands, 'to assist those who should declare in our favour when the event occurs, and bring Holland to reason if she should deviate from her duty.' Hoping, however, to make the republic dependent upon France without so audacious a violation of the rights of nations, Lionne urged D'Estrades to negotiate for the acquisition of Maestricht, or at least for the occupation of Wesel. He went so far as to advise him to obtain the command of the troops belonging to the States. Such were the fears aroused that a project of introducing French garrisons into the towns of Holland, improbable as it was, having been attributed to John de Witt, one of his father's

most faithful friends represented to him that by putting it into execution he would run the risk of sharing the fate of Olden Barneveldt.

The tardy declaration of the King of France in favour of the United Provinces against England, did not dissipate these anxieties, but rather helped to justify them. Louis XIV. had delayed it until now; he permitted it at last, from fear of discouraging the States by further delays, and thus of disposing them to receive the offers of mediation sent by the Emperor of Germany to the Hague. The States, on their side, in order to reassure him, recalled their ambassador, Van Gogh, from London, and pledged themselves to receive no proposals from Charles II. without giving information to the ambassador of France. While they showed themselves resolved to adhere strictly to their promise, Louis, less scrupulous, continued his negotiations with the envoys of Charles at the house of the Queen-Dowager of England at Chaillot; but he was disappointed in his expectations, and they were broken off after a few weeks of useless conferences.

The question now was how to bring about a junction of the French fleet with that of the States. The King of France had announced the despatch of a squadron of thirty sail, commanded by his admiral, the Duke de Beaufort; but he refused to give any assurance for the reciprocal saluting of the flags. According to the regulation which he had ordered, but had not ventured to publish, Louis required that the admiral of the States should be obliged to salute not only the admiral of France, but also the vice-admiral and rear-admiral of the French squadron. He claimed also that the chief command should be given to the admiral of France alone, while the States-General required that the two admirals should be associated together. 'It is impossible to pledge ourselves,' wrote De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'to obey exclusively the signals of the admiral of France, who has never yet been in any naval battle, and that especially in a decisive engagement on which depends the safety or ruin of the republic.'

Even when the agreement had been with difficulty concluded, the States were condemned to a delay of many months

before the arrival of the French fleet. The Duke de Beaufort, who ought to have put to sea in February to join the ships being equipped by the King of France in the Atlantic ports, remained in the Toulon roads until the month of April. He stopped at Lisbon, and only took his departure thence at the end of the summer to rejoin the Dutch fleet, never, however, advancing beyond La Rochelle. 'If he is to remain in the Tagus until he has received fresh orders from the King,' wrote the Grand Pensionary to Van Beuningen, 'I foresee with sorrow that he will not be of much help to us. And I cannot disguise from you that the conduct of the French court is subjected to much comment here.' Van Beuningen, on his side, ceased not to complain vehemently 'that the declaration of war had been only upon paper, as the King of France had only sent out his fleet to amuse itself, and had never intended that it should rejoin that of the States.' Far from defending himself from these accusations, Louis XIV. took pride in them, and in the following year he desired De Ruvigny, his ambassador in London, to let the King of England know 'that he did not think that Charles II. could desire other results from his friendship than those he had in every way shown him during the said war.'

However this might be, the French alliance was not without use to the United Provinces, notwithstanding the insufficient assistance of which they had a right to complain. It prevented them from being crushed, and favoured the success of their negotiations with other powers which put an end to their political isolation. The States-General had reason to fear the hostility of Sweden, which had not forgiven their recent intervention in favour of Denmark. The commercial concessions which they desired their envoy, Ysbrandt, to offer to the Swedish Government contributed to deter it from an offensive alliance with England, and the representations of the French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, induced them to engage not to promote any interests contrary to those of France. The alliance of Denmark seemed more easy to obtain, notwithstanding the ill-will of King Frederick III. who was related to the King of England, and who, forgetful of the services he owed to

the United Provinces, seemed disposed to seek new protectors. The cordial advances of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, the negotiations of Amerongen (the envoy of the republic), and the pecuniary satisfaction which the States-General consented to grant to the amount of 1,800,000 crowns, helped to the conclusion of a treaty which was at last signed at the Hague. The secret articles attached to it stipulated for an alliance offensive and defensive between Denmark and the States-General, by the terms of which forty ships were to be put at the disposal of the United Provinces.

Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg, followed this example. The neighbourhood of the French troops despatched against the Bishop of Münster gave him some uneasiness. He feared that the States, if driven to extremities, might give up to France the town of Wesel, situated in his duchy of Cleves, which he had never ceased to reclaim. His hostility to the Grand Pensionary seemed, moreover, to place an insurmountable obstacle in the way of any attempt at an understanding. He had gone so far as to write that he could not consent to leave the education of the young prince to the States of Holland, because his nephew's life would not be secure in the hands of John de Witt. He had even attempted to intimidate him by threats of the same ill-treatment and disgrace as one of his predecessors had formerly suffered. But German interests, of which he never lost sight, made him anxious for an agreement, to which the States lent themselves by the settlement of their pecuniary differences with him. The latter related to a sum of 100,000 crowns lent by the States to one of the ancestors of the Elector, which with interest now amounted to 1,200,000. His desire for a good understanding was such that he proposed to visit the Hague, that he might there converse with the Grand Pensionary, and place himself in relations of confidential friendship with him. By the treaty which was shortly concluded, February 16th, 1666, satisfied with having obtained from the States 200,000 florins in ready money, and subsidies of pay amounting to more than 50,000 florins a month, the Elector promised them a contingent of 12,000 men.

The United Provinces gained by this treaty something more than the assistance of a powerful neighbour. Once become the allies of the Elector of Brandenburg they could make sure of the intervention of the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg, who did not dare to assist them so long as Frederick William had not declared himself in their favour. The States thus found themselves in a position not merely to repulse the attack of the Bishop of Münster, but also to force him to make peace. This was signed at Cleves on April 18, 1666, within the dominions of the Elector of Brandenburg, and it was to Beverningh's conduct of the negotiations that they owed their prompt success. The bishop undertook to maintain not more than 3,000 men for the security of his principality, to restore all the towns he had taken, and to break the convention by which he had pledged himself to give his assistance to the King of England against the republic.

Six months later, these various treaties were completed and confirmed by a definitive league concluded at the Hague between the States-General, the King of Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, and the Princes of the House of Brunswick-Luneburg. This quadruple alliance assured to the States, in consideration of a reciprocal engagement on their part, a further contingent of 10,800 men, and bound the contracting parties to assist each other with all their forces, during a period of ten years, in case of any fresh attack. It relieved the United Provinces from dependence for defence upon the mercy of France, who would have liked to remain their sole protector so as to be able with greater ease to dictate to them. Diplomacy thus repaired the disappointments and disasters of the war, by negotiations whose success was assured by the foreign policy of the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

The naval war against England might now be renewed under more favourable auspices, and in order to pave the way to its fortunate issue, the States-General, having left no allies to Charles II., prepared to seek enemies for him even in his own kingdom. As early as the month of May 1665 the project of a descent upon Ireland had been mooted in the Council of Dordrecht. Reports had been submitted stating

the chances of a rising. Arms were demanded for 7,000 foot and 3,000 horse, and it was shown with what facility the most important towns such as Limerick and Cork might be surprised. At the same time measures were proposed for inciting to a rebellion in Scotland, by taking advantage of the community of religious belief and commercial interests which bound Scotland to the United Provinces. De Witt, who had secured secret intelligences in that country, called for the prompt co-operation of the King of France, that the signal for a rising might be given. With this object Louis XIV. kept up communications with two of the chiefs of the republican party, Algernon Sidney and Ludlow, but made no haste to profit by the offers which they made to him.

In spite of his procrastinating counsels, the States-General were eager to despatch their fleet. By leaving it inactive the Grand Pensionary feared not merely to provoke popular discontent and to dishearten the crews, but also to give the English time to put to sea with a new squadron. In a long and weighty report he exposed to the ambassador of France the political and maritime considerations which forbade any delay in the naval operations. He repaired to the Texel, accompanied by several deputies of the States-General, in order to hasten the final preparations for departure. To spur on Count D'Estrades to demand the speedy arrival of the French squadron, he expatiated on the number and good order of the ships, as well as on the spirit both of officers and crews—'as gay as if they were going to a wedding.' 'Everything is just as we could wish it,' he wrote to the French ambassador, 'so that nothing remains but to pray God that he will be pleased to facilitate the junction of the allied fleets, and to bestow upon us His blessing in battle.'

The fleet set sail in the beginning of June under the command of Ruyter. The Admiral-in-chief was on board the 'Seven Provinces,' a ship which had been built by the Admiralty of Rotterdam, and which carried the red flag of the States-General on which was represented the Batavian lion. Three squadrons were united under his orders. He retained for himself the command of the first, that of the

Admiralty of the Meuse, with Lieutenant-Admiral Van Nès as his second in command. The second squadron was under the orders of the lieutenant-admirals of Friesland and Zealand, Cornelius Evertz and Hiddes de Vries. The third, composed of the ships of the admiralties of Amsterdam and of North Holland, had Tromp and Meppel for lieutenant-admirals. The fleet, whose equipment cost the United Provinces 5,800,000 florins annually, consisted of a hundred sail, of which seventy-two were line-of-battle ships; they carried 4,700 guns, the efficiency of which had lately been greatly increased by the invention of chain-shot, due to John de Witt, and they were manned by 22,000 men, including both sailors and soldiers.

The English fleet, of about equal strength, had fewer ships and more men. The command had been entrusted to Monk and Prince Rupert. It was similarly divided into three squadrons: that of the Red, the White, and the Blue, under the respective orders of Monk, Admiral Askew, and Admiral Allen. A flying squadron of twenty ships had been deputed, under Prince Rupert's orders, to watch the movements of the French fleet, if the latter should attempt a junction with that of the States. Monk, who wished to reserve to himself the honours of victories, had been careful thus to dismiss a rival to his glory, at the risk of weakening the naval force at his disposal.

Friday, June 11, 1666, the two fleets met off the Downs. That of the republic was at anchor, wind and tide being contrary. At the first approach of the enemy they cut their cables, and at one o'clock in the afternoon the attack began on both sides with equal determination. The third squadron, which was to have formed the rear, owing to the direction of the wind became the van, and took the largest share of the fighting. Tromp, whose ship had been struck by a red-hot shot, which set fire to his stern gallery, told off half his crew to extinguish the flames, without ceasing to follow up the enemy with his usual intrepidity; but having unfortunately come into collision with a Dutch vessel, he lost his masts, and was obliged to remove to another ship, on board of which he continued the

battle until five in the afternoon. At that hour, owing to an imprudent movement, the English fleet was obliged to tack, and thus threw into his hands with another ship that of the vice-admiral of the White, Admiral Barklay, the Duke of York's brother-in-law, who had been struck by a musket-ball after making a valiant defence, and left only his dead body to those who boarded and seized his ship. Ruyter, on his side, had been engaged with Monk. The two admirals had obstinately sought each other out, but had not long remained within range of one another. Monk, having lost his mainmast, was forced to withdraw, while Ruyter was repelling the attack of a seventy-gun ship, which he finally sank. Two French volunteers who had made a point of assisting in this naval engagement under his orders, Count de Guiche and the Prince of Monaco, did honour to France by their valour. They had embarked on board Captain Terlon's ship which caught fire and was in danger of sinking, and were preparing to leave it by throwing themselves into the sea, when another ship came within reach, on board which they were able to jump. After fighting there as gaily as if they were dancing at a ball, impatient to share the dangers of the admiral-in-chief, they paid a high price to be conveyed in a boat, under the enemy's fire, to Ruyter's ship. This first day was disastrous only to the Zealand squadron, whose lieutenant-admiral, Cornelius Evertz, had engaged with the English rear-admiral, Harman. The Englishman, whose crew was reduced from 300 to only forty, defended himself with extraordinary courage, and brought off his ship in safety. In the attack Evertz was struck down by a shot. His two sons concealed his death, in obedience to his instructions, and thus prevented it from disastrously affecting the issue of the engagement. The next morning, at six o'clock, the battle was renewed with equal fury. The sea had calmed, and was more favourable to the use of the guns. The fleets in order of battle passed each other three times in the course of the morning, without being able to come to close quarters. At noon, Tromp, consulting no one but himself, and wishing to profit by the favourable wind, undertook to turn the flank of the English fleet and take it in rear. This manœuvre

disturbed the order of attack and was unsuccessful. Of the two ships which followed him, that of Vice-Admiral Van den Helst, who was killed on board her, was disabled, and the other was sunk by a round shot, while Tromp himself was forced to abandon his own vessel, which was completely disabled.

Ruyter, who was just about to give the signal for boarding, seeing the peril to which his lieutenant's squadron was exposed, resolved to pierce the enemy's line, and come to his assistance. The enemy, unable to bar his passage, attempted to enclose him in an impenetrable ring, and the leading ships of the English squadrons attacked him in turns by firing broadsides and despatching fireships against him. Supported by the squadron of North Holland, which he had again rallied, he repulsed the attack with invincible determination, and sank six of the enemy's ships which were closely pressing him. But the damage which he had himself sustained forced him to retire, and he was obliged to leave to his lieutenant-admiral, Van Nès, the task of harassing the retreat of the enemy, who retired in good order towards the English coast. This pursuit won for the fleet of the States an important prize, which shed lustre on its victory. Admiral Askew, who commanded the squadron of the White on board the 'Royal Prince,' the finest ship in the English navy, carrying ninety guns and a crew of 600 men, had run aground, and, finding himself in danger of being set fire to by the Dutch fireships, was forced to surrender. Tromp was already flattering himself with the idea of bringing this splendid prize into the ports of the republic. But Ruyter, who had now come up with him, whether as Tromp asserted to rob a rival of this honour, or because he feared, if the fight recommenced, to be unable to guard so large a vessel, caused her to be burnt.

The English fleet had only apparently retired, in order to take measures to resume the offensive. The next day, June 14, 1666, Prince Rupert rejoined Monk with his squadron: they again set sail, and immediately formed themselves in line of battle. The Dutch fleet, favoured by the wind, was

ready for action, and the captains showed themselves eager to respond to the patriotic encouragements addressed to them by Ruyter. The battle began eight leagues from the shore off the coast of Flanders. At the first onset, De Liefde, vice-admiral of Tromp's division, hard pressed by the vice-admiral of Prince Rupert's squadron, was forced to shift his flag on to another ship. Ruyter and Prince Rupert both came to the assistance of their subordinates. Prince Rupert's ship, riddled through and through with shot, was run into by a fireship, and very nearly burnt. Vice-Admiral Algernon, who was following him, was mortally wounded. At the second attack, Tromp, constant to his favourite manœuvre, cut through the enemy's line, and for an instant threw it into disorder; but his squadron was so damaged that it required the greatest efforts on his part to bring it off. Towards the end of the day, Ruyter, whose ammunition was beginning to fail, determined to force a victory by giving the signal for attack to the whole fleet. After sustaining the shock for two hours, the enemy was forced to give way, and vainly endeavoured to get to windward to reform the line of defence. Monk and Prince Rupert, whose ships had been too much injured to continue the battle, could not prevent a precipitate retreat. Ruyter urged on the pursuit in the hope of destroying the hostile navy, until he was checked towards evening by a thick fog. The next day, the English fleet, having regained its own harbours, could no longer be overtaken; and that of the States, fearing to venture near the sandbanks off the coast of England, returned in triumph to the mouths of the Scheldt.

The account of the battle, sent by John de Witt to Van Beuningen, assumes from his pen the tone and even the very phraseology of a military bulletin. 'One ship of the squadron of the White, supposed to carry 50 or 60 guns,' he writes, 'sank along side Admiral de Liefde, who had given it its quietus. It is certain also that two of the enemy's ships have been burned, one on the second and the other on the final day of the battle, for some of our sailors are wearing breeches made from the fore-sail of one of these vessels, which they had visited in the ship's boat for purposes of

pillage whilst they were burning, so that one may truly say that they carried off their booty from the very jaws of hell.' A few days later, reverting to his usual train of thought, he writes: 'We have only to pray that the Lord will continue to this fleet the succour which He has already given.' He had gone down to Flushing to welcome it, accompanied by his sister, Maria Hœufft, whose husband was a member of the Board of Admiralty of Rotterdam. Her religious belief was as fervent as that of her brother, and she was touched with 'the pious and at the same time valiant dispositions' shown by the sailors.

The States had lost three vice-admirals, 2,000 men and four ships. The losses of the English amounted to 5,000 men killed and 3,000 prisoners; the battle cost them besides seventeen ships, of which nine remained in the possession of the victors. Public thanksgivings were ordered in the United Provinces. Simultaneously, bonfires were lighted in London, although according even to the testimony of the English historian, Burnet, the celebration of such rejoicings in England was 'to mock God and to trifle with man.'

The honours of the victory were shared between Tromp and Ruyter; 'of whom one,' wrote Count de Guiche, was 'the sword, and the other the shield of the republic.' Tromp had disconcerted the enemy by his impetuosity. When they saw his flag successively flying from six different ships, on board which he had embarked in turn 'to give battle, as a man changes his horse in the middle of an engagement on land, the English asked themselves if there were five or six Tromps in the fleet.' Still, by rushing into the midst of the enemy's forces on the second day of the battle, without sufficiently considering the danger, he had obliged Ruyter to risk everything to save him. 'This daring manœuvre,' wrote D'Estrades, 'might another time destroy him and his whole fleet.' As to Ruyter he had failed in no point in the exercise of the chief command, and the success of the engagement was due as much to his decision as to his prudence.

Both fleets had suffered so much in this obstinate encounter that they were forced to remain in harbour to be put into con-

dition to go to sea again. The Dutch fleet was ready to set sail first, thanks to the indefatigable care of the Grand Pensionary, who looked after everything, 'gave himself no rest, and performed almost impossibilities.' It put to sea on July 4, and set sail for the Thames and the Downs; its mission was to burn the enemy's ships and to make a descent upon England, on the faith of information which De Witt had too hastily accepted. During this expedition, which had no results, the English made good use of their time to increase their naval forces, and their fleet, which numbered a few vessels more than that of the republic, then sailed down the Thames to meet it. They came up with the Dutch towards evening, and, anchoring near Norfolk's Land, made ready for battle on the morrow. Before engaging in it, Ruyter received from the Grand Pensionary a despatch thus worded: 'If there is still time, take the most minute precautions for safety. Traitors have determined to set on fire and blow up several vessels of your fleet, no doubt including that on which you are, by means of barrels with false bottoms containing machines which are already on board and whose smouldering fires may take effect at any moment.' These fears were unfounded, and the searches instituted produced no discoveries.

The battle was no less fierce than the preceding one, but it was far from being so fortunate for the Dutch fleet. Monk and Ruyter found themselves again face to face, Monk with two new vice-admirals, Thomas Allen and Jeremiah Smith, Ruyter with his former officers, to whom had been added John Evertz, the old comrade of Obdam. He had resigned his command on account of his advanced age, after the battle lost in the preceding year, but had urgently implored to be allowed to resume it, to replace his brother, who had been killed in the last engagement, and whose death he desired to avenge or to share. At the very beginning of the action, the van formed of the squadrons of Zealand and Friesland advanced too rapidly, and the two lieutenant-admirals in command were killed. John Evertz had a leg shot off by a cannon-ball and succumbed at once to the wound. His father, his four brothers, and one of his sons had perished in the service of the republic, like

him, sacrificing their lives for their country. Hiddes de Vries, one of the most skilful seamen of his time, whom Ruyter considered fittest to succeed himself, shared the same fate, as did also Vice-Admiral Koenders. Disheartened by the death of their chiefs, the Friesland squadron made a shameful retreat. Vice-Admiral Koenders' crew mutinied, refused to execute the manœuvres ordered, and gave the signal to retire, which was obeyed by the whole flotilla of the van. As to the rear division, it put the finishing touch to the chances of success of the engagement by an act of fatal imprudence. Tromp, who commanded in conjunction with Meppel, the lieuteuant-admiral of North Holland, after waiting long to attack the enemy, had boldly assumed the offensive against the squadron of the Blue. He set fire to one of the largest of the enemy's vessels, and disabled the admiral's ship. But he allowed himself to be seduced into a pursuit of the English squadron, which had pretended flight to separate him from Ruyter, whose safety was thus imperilled.

The admiral-in-chief, now reduced to his own squadron, and of this even a part was dispersed, found himself exposed to an unequal encounter in which it seemed that he must be vanquished. After valiantly defending himself during an entire day, with eight or nine ships against twenty-two, he took advantage of the fall of night to repair the injuries of his vessels and to take them out of range of the enemy. He hoped that Tromp's squadron would rejoin him, and that his signals would recall to action the van division, but his expectations were disappointed. He found himself the next morning as much isolated as he had been on the previous evening, with a part of the English fleet ranged in crescent form round his ships. The murderous fire to which he was exposed rendered the destruction of his ships inevitable. In this extremity he sent for his vice-admiral, Van Nès, to come on board to advise with him as to the course that should be taken. They decided that as they could not continue the fight they could render no better service to the State than by beating a retreat, and separated with a mutual promise of sharing the same fate.

Whilst Ruyter was opening a way for himself by bringing his guns to bear on the ships surrounding him, Monk, who hoped to take his great rival prisoner and carry him in triumph to London, pursued him at full speed. After obstinately firing into his vessel he determined to attack it with a fireship. Ruyter at once lowered three boats to keep off the danger. Four French gentlemen who had come on board as volunteers, the Chevaliers of Lorraine and Coislin, the Chevalier Cavoi, and Baron Busca, jumped into them to claim their share of the risk. The danger to which the admiral's ship was exposed was imminent; the fireship had arrived within range without the possibility of keeping it off; there only remained on board the pilot and the sailor who was charged to set fire to the powder. Ruyter owed his escape to the promptness of his movement. He suddenly put about, thus escaping collision with the fireship, and after attempting to sink it with his guns, he had ordered the boats to take possession of it, when the enemy set fire to it. Monk, fearing that the flagship might escape him, turned upon her the full fire of his batteries in the hope of sinking her. Ruyter had lost 200 men, and for a moment he felt his courage fail him. 'The circumstances were such,' he wrote in his report to the States, 'that I saw nothing before me but the total loss of what still remained.' He was in despair at not having been killed by one of the balls falling around him. But when his son-in-law, De Witte, captain of marines, proposed that they should kill themselves together, he overcame all weakness and redoubled his efforts to defend himself. He succeeded in approaching the Zealand sandbanks, where Monk did not venture to pursue him. He had left behind him three vessels threatened by fourteen English ships, and he now sent out to their rescue the Zealand squadron which he had at last overtaken near shore. While the hostile fleet was obliged to retire to avoid running aground, he cast anchor near the island of Walcheren, off Middleburg, without leaving one ship in the enemy's hands.

The English remained none the less masters of the sea. The United Provinces paid dearly for their inability to dispute

possession of it, which was more fatal to them than a defeat. One of the hostile flotillas carried fire and sword to the ill-defended entrance of the Texel. A hundred and sixty merchantmen under the convoy of two line-of-battle ships had retired into the roads of the Flie, notwithstanding the warnings given to them to seek a more secure harbour; they believed themselves to be here safe from danger, behind the sandbanks. An English frigate, followed by five fireships, found an entrance. She was piloted by a refugee, Captain Heemskerk, who, after the naval defeat of the preceding year, had been banished the republic for his cowardly desertion of the fleet. The two men-of-war were run into by the English fireships and reduced to ashes, and the enemy, profiting by the confusion that ensued, set fire to the merchant vessels, of which only eight or nine escaped the flames; the losses were estimated at twelve millions of florins. The island was ill-guarded, and the English crews, 1,200 strong, might easily have made themselves masters of the magazines belonging to the India Company and to the States, if their landing had not been prevented by the rains. To compensate themselves they made an incursion into the isle of Schelling, favoured by the high tide, and, contrary to all the rules of war, set fire to 4,000 houses. In retiring they seized Flodorp, which they likewise burnt, and massacred its inhabitants; they were only overtaken at the mouth of the Elbe by a Dutch squadron, which revenged their devastations by burning four of the enemy's ships, on one of which the traitor Heemskerk lost his life. So audacious an enterprise seemed, however, to deal an irreparable blow to the power and security of the republic.

These disasters were still further aggravated by the dissensions between Ruyter and Tromp. After his imprudent pursuit of the English squadron with which he was engaged, Tromp had not rejoined the fleet until the day after the return of the admiral-in-chief, at the risk of falling a victim to his temerity. Ruyter 'with impetuous vehemence' accused him of having caused the loss of the battle. Instead of excusing himself, Tromp, whose pride was incorrigible, ventured to retort upon Ruyter, reproaching him with having

lost the opportunity of cutting off the English vanguard and of having thus let slip the victory; he even forgot himself so far as to address to the States of Holland complaints against him as unjust as they were violent. The States, fearing the results of this breach, hastened to despatch their Grand Pensionary to arrange matters. On his way to Flushing by boat De Witt very nearly fell into the midst of the enemy's fleet. Having escaped this danger, he set heartily to work to pacify the dispute. Notwithstanding his friendship for Ruyter he received Tromp well, listened kindly to his explanations, and acknowledged that Ruyter had reproached him in too harsh terms. He endeavoured to bring them together by inviting both to dine with him. The States of Holland were less conciliatory; suspicious of Tromp and anxious about his connection with the Orange party, they determined to replace him by Van Ghent, a colonel of marines, although Tromp vainly endeavoured to melt them by his submission, declaring to De Witt 'that he would resign without a murmur the command of his squadron in the next engagement, if only he might be given a ship as second in command to Ruyter.' De Witt would have been glad to dissuade the States from such severity, but they refused to be satisfied with Tromp's promises. In the interests of discipline they dismissed him, and the crews of the fleet did not, as might have been feared, take his part.

The Grand Pensionary was impatient to resume the naval operations by means of the tardy assistance of the French fleet which he demanded 'in all haste.' The King of France confined himself to empty expressions of goodwill. To do honour to the exploits of Ruyter, he had just sent him the insignia of the Order of St. Michael, suspended from a gold chain, and his portrait set in diamonds. Ruyter in expressing his thanks to Louis had answered meaningly 'that he would prove his gratitude better when the French admiral by joining the Dutch fleet should permit him to fight by his side for the common cause.' After advancing as far as Brest with sixteen ships, the Duke de Beaufort had there anchored, fearing to expose himself to attack from the English fleet, which had taken up its position off the Isle of Wight. Ruyter, who had gone out to

meet him, waited for four days in vain in the roads of St. Jean, near Calais, for news of the movements of the French squadron, while the Duke de Beaufort, without giving him any notice, sailed for Dieppe, where he only remained one day. De Witt, on receiving accidental information of this, caused the order of recall sent to Ruyter to be countermanded, and new instructions were sent to him to continue his advance. He executed them with a readiness to which Count d'Estrades himself bears witness. But the channel was closed to him on the night of November 27 by a terrible storm which scattered his ships. Louis XIV. evaded the reproaches of the States, and accused them of having made Ruyter leave the roads of Saint Jean too hastily, and, rather pleased than annoyed at the obstacles which prevented the junction of the fleets, he put off till the following spring the performance of his engagements.

The Grand Pensionary determined none the less to continue the war, and to prove that the United Provinces could suffice for themselves. With this view he had already obtained authority to rejoin the fleet, no longer commanded by Ruyter, who had been wounded in the throat by a lighted fuse, which had endangered his life. The letters which De Witt wrote to the Duke de Beaufort lamenting his retreat, to the principal deputies of the States, and to those of the admiralties from whom he called for a speedy despatch of provisions, bear witness to his impatience to encounter the enemy. His hopes were, however, disappointed. After vainly offering battle, the Dutch fleet was forced by stress of weather and illness to return into harbour. It had at least retaken possession of the sea and restored the honour of the flag of the United Provinces.

Whilst the Republic was bearing the burden of a foreign war, she had to defend herself at home against the intrigues of a powerful party which made itself the accomplice of the King of England in seeking to force peace upon the States. Ever since the preceding year, after the fatal engagement in which Admiral Obdam had been killed, the popular discontent had been freely expressed. To take advantage of it, the English minister, Downing, had remained at the Hague, in spite of the

war, justifying himself by the residence in London of the ambassador of the United Provinces, Van Gogh. 'The States,' wrote Louis XIV. to D'Estrades, 'nourished in him a dangerous serpent.'

Downing declared that the King, his master, desired to live at peace with the republic, and he accused the Grand Pensionary De Witt of an obstinate determination to make war upon him, out of hatred to the uncle of the Prince of Orange; he demanded that an extraordinary assembly of all the provinces should be summoned, which should be invested with full powers, and from which he expected the restoration of the Prince of Orange. He did not indeed attempt to conceal his relations with the Orange party. He showed himself in public with the young prince's tutor, Zuylestein, who had married an Englishwoman, and often spent the evening with him, in company with the prince and his advisers. He had besides taken into his service as his principal agent, Oudart, who had formerly been secretary to the Princess Royal, and he employed him to gain over the principal deputies of the provinces, in the hope of forcing Holland to put an end to the war, and placing her at the mercy of Charles II. The States of Holland, who were closely watching these intrigues, gave orders for the arrest of Oudart, notwithstanding De Witt's apparent hesitation. A month later his fate was shared by Gringam, Downing's secretary, of whose seditious practices they had received information. They thus avenged themselves for the arrest of Cunæus, the secretary of the embassy in London, who had recently been imprisoned, at the moment when he was preparing to visit the sailors who were prisoners of war. Downing began at last to fear for his own liberty, and, hearing that it was threatened, quitted the Hague precipitately. His departure disconcerted the partisans of England, and the proposal made by the deputies of Overyssel to the States-General, that the young Prince of Orange should be sent as ambassador to Charles II., was not persisted in.

But in the following year, the general discouragement that naturally ensued from the disappointments and disasters of the last campaign revived the hopes of the Orange party. They

attempted to turn it to profit by urging an agreement with England, in order to make that the prelude to a change of government. These secret negotiations were conducted by a gentleman of French origin, Henri Fleury de Coulant, Lord of Buat. He belonged to an ancient family which had given marshals and admirals to France, and had married the daughter of Muysch, the former secretary of the States-General. After being page to the Stadtholder, Frederick Henry, he became captain of the guard to William II., and having continued to serve in the army of the States after the death of the last Stadtholder, he had distinguished himself by his courage in the war against Sweden. He had acquired the confidence of the Orange party, which, according to the testimony of a contemporary, 'made the mistake of attempting to transform into a diplomatist a man who was more fitted to fight than to meddle with politics.' Buat had been careful at the same time to keep on good terms with John de Witt, who on his side behaved with consideration towards him, hoping to discover by his means the intrigues of the King of England. It was no doubt with this object in view that the Grand Pensionary welcomed his first communications, and encouraged him to receive the overtures made by Charles, 'although he was not disposed to trust to them.' After consultation with the States of Holland, he authorised Buat to continue the preliminaries, but warned him to 'avoid any compromising measures,' and enjoined him to make known the answers given to his letters.

Buat immediately put himself in communication with the English Secretary-of-State, Lord Arlington, under the apparent direction of John de Witt, whose instructions, however, he lost no time in evading. Instead of acting in conformity with them, he allowed himself to be entangled in political intrigues, and determined to precipitate the conclusion of peace, in order to serve the interests of the Orange party. With this object, and under pretence of being better informed as to the disposition of the English court, he sent to London one of his friends, Gabriel Sylvius, son of a pastor of the church at Orange, and formerly in the service of the Princess Royal. He undertook

besides to collect the partisans of the House of Orange by bringing them into an association called the Society of Good Friends, which held its meetings at Rotterdam, and with which the young prince established relations. He flattered himself that he should obtain the concurrence of several deputies of the towns of Holland, and repaired secretly to Antwerp, where he had arranged to meet Sylvius and impart to him his plans. An intimate correspondence was maintained henceforth between Buat and Arlington, by the help of a cipher which Sylvius conveyed to the English Minister, and the unimportant letters were all that Buat contented himself with showing to De Witt, heedless of the danger of such conduct, of which the former suspicions shown by the Grand Pensionary might have warned him.

These proceedings might have continued for some time longer if Buat had not ruined himself by his own imprudence. Having gone one morning to visit the Grand Pensionary, 'who was in haste to go out, he handed to him at his request the last letters he had received, without perceiving that he had left among them one which it was important to him to conceal. It had been written to him by Sylvius, and had on the cover these words: 'For yourself.' It was in these terms: 'I must tell you that it would be convenient if the towns that are well disposed towards a good peace could unite closely together with this object, and come to some vigorous resolution among themselves, on which we could place solid reliance. In that case, I dare assure you, that the moment anything real was visible, more open steps would be taken on this side, and that a more detailed correspondence would be entered into, which should furnish privately all the means that might serve to favour a good arrangement.'

Such a letter, in spite of the intentionally vague terms employed, was sufficient to give the alarm and to reveal the plot. Buat did not perceive his fatal mistake until he had reached home, and he then ventured to return to the Grand Pensionary and ask for the letter which he had given up. De Witt replied that, in obedience to his official instructions, he was bound to hand it to the councillor-deputies of the province

Having failed in sufficient boldness to re-possess himself of it, were it at the sword's point, Buat did not even take advantage of the intimation given him by the Grand Pensionary on purpose to afford him a means of escape. De Witt, in fact, was interested in preventing a trial which might compromise himself on account of the encouragement he had given to Buat's correspondence. But instead of taking flight, when, according to a contemporary account, he had 'only to take horse in order to be out of Holland in five or six hours' time,' Buat, bewildered or over-confident, did not even think of providing for his safety by destroying the compromising papers that remained in his hands. He waited till the guards of the States came to arrest him in the evening, having had the whole day in which to escape, or to baffle all researches.

The papers which were seized in consequence of his inexcusable carelessness confirmed the proofs of connivance with the Orange party, which the Grand Pensionary thought it right to make known to the young Prince and to the Princess-Dowager. They rested particularly on the copy of a letter from Buat to Arlington written five months previously. 'We have formed a large party for peace, and consequently for my young master,' he had written, 'and we have taken our measures that he may be able to carry matters with a high hand over the other party which has always kept uppermost until now, in such manner that the King need not doubt that my young master will be able to stand, and that, before many days have passed, our good friends may obtain his recognition by means of the assurance which Sylvius and I have given them, that his Majesty has the best intentions in the world towards the peace, which has won the hearts of all the good people here.'

The fact of a secret correspondence commenced long before was conclusively revealed by the imprudent words which concluded this letter: 'To avoid the seizure of my last despatches I have thrown them into the fire.' The discovery of this document could not fail to result in Buat being sent for trial before the court of Holland. His accomplices, in their haste to escape prosecution, aggravated the accusations

which hung over him, and their flight, which was an avowal of guilt, contributed to his ruin.

On learning his arrest, one of his confederates, Ruyven, who had been banished ten years before for his intrigues, and who had returned within the last four years to Leuwaarden in Friesland, thought himself no longer in safety, and hastily retired to Antwerp. At the same time two other of the associates, Kièvit, Tromp's brother-in-law, and Van den Horst, magistrates of Rotterdam, the former a member of the Council of State, and the latter councillor-deputy of Holland, fearing to be compromised by the seizure of his papers, sought refuge, one in London and the other at Brussels. The important position which they held gave credit to the suspicions of a vast plot intended to place the United Provinces in subjection to the Prince of Orange, and thus to make them vassals of England. Louis XIV. took the alarm, fearing that the republic, detached from the French alliance, might fall under a foreign domination. Accordingly, having commissioned his ambassador at the Hague to congratulate the Grand Pensionary upon the arrest of Buat, he hastened to demand a speedy and severe sentence. He expressed impatience at the slowness of the proceedings, and was ready to accuse the States of Holland themselves of a secret understanding with England 'which he should know well how to punish.' This intervention of the King of France determined them to prove themselves implacable, and to retain his assistance they gave him a sanguinary proof of their compliance.

De Witt committed the unpardonable weakness of lending himself to this policy. He sacrificed Buat to the uneasiness of Louis XIV., as he had, five years earlier, sacrificed three regicides to the resentment of Charles II., not succeeding, by a just retribution, in permanently gaining for the republic the benefit of alliances bought with the price of blood. He was not content with forcing the Prince of Orange, alarmed at the threatened revelations, to hold timidly aloof, while he publicly disavowed the conduct of Buat; he interposed directly in the trial, by addressing himself to the president

of the court, Van Dorp de Maasdam. 'I hope,' he wrote, 'that in this affair the court will proceed with vigour and promptitude, otherwise there would be great danger to fear: *Quis nescit maximam esse peccando illecebram impunitatis spem?*' ('Who does not know that the hope of impunity is the greatest encouragement to evil?') Guided by the suggestions of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland, suspecting the court of a disposition to leniency, charged them to do justice, and determined to summon the judges before their assembly. The president contented himself with replying that the judges would do their duty.

Dissatisfied with their prolonged indecision, but not daring, in spite of the proposal of some members, to require them to pronounce sentence in their presence, the States deputed seven commissioners to make declaration before the court that they considered Buat to be guilty of the crime of high treason. They thus perverted the law into an instrument of political power, according to the evil examples of the times, of which the Republic of the United Provinces had been unable to resist the pernicious contagion. After deliberating for more than five hours, the court, which had not been spared, on the other hand, either intrigues or remonstrances from the French ambassador, allowed itself to be dictated to. Of the eight judges who sat, three were in favour of banishment; five—of whom two belonged to the Orange party—voted for the penalty of death.

Guided by the suggestions of the Grand Pensionary, the States of Holland, suspecting the court, possibly with justice, of a disposition to leniency, had determined to summon the judges before their assembly. But after listening to the speech, in which De Witt, speaking in their name, called upon the judges to do prompt and decided justice, the president merely replied that the court would do its duty.

Buat's accomplices were not spared: Van Ruyven and Kièvit were, like him, condemned to death, while Van den Horst, who was alone treated with more indulgence, was punished only with exile; but they had all placed themselves in safety, and the sentence of the court could strike only one victim.

According to some accounts the real author of the sentence was Van Dorp de Maasdam, who, as senior judge, replaced provisionally the late president of the court, Dedel, to whom no successor had yet been appointed. It is true that, upon the suggestion of the Grand Pensionary, the States seemed desirous to reward his obsequious compliance, by granting him the salary of president and dating his reception of it from the day when he first filled the vacant office; and that this favour was granted to him upon the very day, May 3, upon which the sentence was pronounced. But at least he may be cleared from the base intrigue imputed to him. Not content with finding Buat guilty, Van Dorp is said to have manœuvred to ruin him more surely by getting rid of Van der Graeff, the judge most leniently disposed towards him. Summoned to Buat by a fictitious message, the visit he made to the prisoner was said to have been used as a pretext for excluding him from his place among the judges, and this exclusion—failing which the majority of votes would doubtless have been for exile—had sufficed to secure the capital sentence. The official notes of the trial refute this assertion. It is true that Van der Graeff did visit Buat to inquire after the prisoner's health, taking care to be accompanied by the gaoler in order to avoid any accusation of a private interview. This imprudent step having been noised abroad and reported to the Council of Dordrecht, Van der Graeff came to an explanation with his colleagues, and Van Dorp de Maasdam was only one of those who voted in favour of the resignation offered by Van der Graeff and not forced upon him.

The States of Holland, having by this condemnation intimidated the partisans of the King of England, might have proved themselves merciful. They continued inflexible. De Witt was with the fleet, and they dared not, without consulting him, show mercy to the culprit. In vain did the States of Zealand claim the right to judge Buat in his capacity of captain of a company in their pay; in vain the Elector of Brandenburg endeavoured to obtain at least a reprieve. The application of the States-General themselves was denied, notwithstanding their complaint that Buat had been withdrawn

from their jurisdiction. Notwithstanding that the peace negotiations, which formed the subject of his trial, belonged to their prerogatives of federal power, they could obtain no attention to their protest, although their president for the week, De Wit, deputy of Holland and cousin of the Grand Pensionary, had made himself the mouthpiece of it. Six days after his condemnation, Buat was executed, the popular imprecations against his judges resounding to the very foot of the scaffold. His death did not disarm the French Government, which pushed its animosity so far as to complain that the crime of high treason had not been specified in the sentence, so as to justify the confiscation of the property belonging to him in France. By taking every means to ensure his condemnation, although he had vainly allowed him the chance of escape, De Witt had sacrificed justice to political expediency, either to satisfy France, or to discourage the Orange party. He had no excuse to offer but that of reasons of State, the usual pander to all sins of public life, which it attempts to justify, but can never exonerate.

When once the plot of the secret negotiations had been baffled and cruelly punished, the Grand Pensionary, having no longer any fear lest peace should be imposed on the republic, had no further interest in the continuation of the war. The King of England, on his side, could hardly bear the cost of it. He was involved in all the embarrassments of an exhausted exchequer. He had to fear besides in Scotland the risings of the Presbyterian party, and in Ireland the insurrection of the Catholics. De Witt urged the King of France to send arms to the Irish, 'who,' he said, 'awaited only an opportunity to shake off the yoke.' Meanwhile, the calamities befalling London spread consternation through the kingdom. The plague had ravaged every quarter of the town, and had carried off in less than six weeks seventy thousand victims. Hardly had this scourge ceased, when a terrible fire reduced to ashes two-thirds of the city and its finest buildings. Parliament, after granting the King a fresh subsidy of a million, expressed itself strongly in favour of peace, and when the States sent back to London the body of

Admiral Barklay, who had been killed in one of the late engagements, Charles himself took pains to assure them of his pacific dispositions. These were, however, rather apparent than real. He did not yet despair of bringing the republic to his feet by new intrigues. It was with this object that, having first, though expecting a refusal, proposed London as the seat of the negotiations, he then suggested the Hague, which it seemed impossible should be declined.

The Court of France dissuaded the States from accepting this, fearing lest Charles II. should profit by the return of his minister, Downing, and the despatch of the plenipotentiaries, to give fresh encouragement to the Orange party, and to detach the republic from the French alliance. Neither did De Witt desire to expose the republic to this danger. Not that he was to be moved by fears of a plot against his life, with which the French ambassador attempted to alarm him, representing that Downing would have greater facilities for instigating such at the Hague than anywhere else. He showed himself so little concerned that he proudly refused the proposal made in the assembly of the States of Holland, to give him a guard. But he did not conceal from himself the intrigues which the King of England might easily set on foot under the shelter of diplomatic immunities, if the peace conferences were held in the town where the States sat in assembly. He resolved then to oppose a refusal to Charles's proposal, notwithstanding the favourable reception which the deputies of the other provinces seemed disposed to give it. By his advice, the States of Holland, presenting themselves in a body in the federal assembly, declared that they could not be held bound against their wishes to permit the assembling of a congress on the territory of their province. The States-General allowed themselves to be persuaded. To mislead Charles II. as to their true motives, they expressed fears that at the Hague they should be unable to protect his envoys against the popular irritation, reminding him of the disastrous fate that had befallen those of Cromwell; they thanked him none the less for his advances, and offered him his choice of Breda, Bois-le-Duc, and Maestricht.

After vainly endeavouring thus to provoke internal dissensions, 'which is a great feature of English policy,' wrote De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'and one which it requires dexterity to parry,' Charles abruptly changed his tactics, and resolved to hasten forward the conferences at any cost. He proposed to profit by them to resume intercourse with Louis XIV., and to break the ties which united France to the republic. Circumstances appeared to lend themselves henceforward to a change of policy, and aroused in him the hope of depriving the United Provinces of their ally. Louis appeared impatient to commence the dismemberment of the Spanish monarchy, and was preparing to invade the Netherlands, sword in hand, to claim their succession. The English Government foresaw that the States-General, feeling themselves threatened by this annexation, would consider it their duty to oppose it, and would thus themselves alienate the King of France from their cause. Charles, therefore, hoping to isolate them, instead of finding fault with their refusal to allow the congress to meet at the Hague, hastened to inform the States that he would comply with their wishes by making choice of Breda.

The Grand Pensionary could not refuse to accept this fresh offer of negotiation. He had no settled aversion from peace; the projects of Louis XIV. against the Spanish Netherlands appeared to him now so formidable that he recognised the absolute necessity of treating with England. With the wish of assisting towards a reconciliation, he had recourse to the intervention of Peter Coyet, the Swedish ambassador in London and formerly his fellow-student at Leyden, to propose the mediation of Sweden, which was accepted. He had, indeed, never desired to make the republic the irreconcilable enemy of England, and had refused, shortly before the Fire of London, to take any part in a plot for burning down that town, declaring 'that he did not wish to enlarge and render irreparable the breach between the two nations.' Later on, when hostilities had been resumed, De Witt still wrote 'that it would be unprofitable and unchristian to set fire to the towns, and that it was far better to have some consideration for the inhabitants.' As soon as he learned that Charles was ready to

send to Breda his two ambassadors, Denzil Holles and Henry Coventry, he urged the appointment of the plenipotentiaries of the republic. Obliged to leave to the States of each province the right of nominating one of their deputies, and fearing that so numerous a deputation would easily be disunited, he caused it to be decided that full powers should be entrusted to only three of the negotiators, Jongestal, president of the court of justice in Friesland, Peter de Huybert, pensionary of Zealand, and Beverningh, to whom the chief place in the embassy was reserved. The King of France sent as his representatives Count d'Estrades and Courtin; the King of Denmark, whose participation had been insisted upon by the States, was represented by Clingenberg and Charisius; and the King of Sweden, in his capacity of mediator, by Flemming and Count Dohna, who had been selected to succeed the lately deceased Coyet. In order to obviate all questions of etiquette or precedence 'a large enclosed round table was surrounded with exactly similar chairs, with eight wickets corresponding with the room-doors, so that the negotiators, on entering, might immediately take their places as they came, without the possibility of any dispute.'

It was at Breda, as afterwards at Aix-la-Chapelle, and later still at Madrid, that Beverningh justified his reputation as a statesman, and took rank amongst the first diplomatists of his day. According to his contemporaries he was born with the gift of appeasing dissensions, and he merited the surname of the 'Pacific.' 'No affair is too complicated for him to disentangle it, if he chooses to take the trouble,' declared those who treated with him. His perspicacity and correctness of judgment were invaluable towards the success of an embassy. Gifted, besides, with a readiness of speech, which often rose to eloquence, he knew how to combine moderation with firmness. 'Less severe than John de Witt, he more readily encouraged confidences, when they were not opposed to the welfare of the state.' To excuse his occasional outbursts of temper he was apt to attribute them to purposely affected intemperance, a fact mentioned in all the reports of the French ambassadors. 'He likes to drink,' says Courtin,

'and the first fumes of the wine go to his head.' 'With his morning sobriety,' observes Pomponne, 'he often loses the intelligence and capacity that he possesses before dinner.' D'Estrades writes later: 'A few extra glasses of wine often make him much more open in his talk.' Under cover of this excuse he allowed himself a violence of language and demeanour which were calculated to hasten the conclusion of diplomatic negotiations and assure their success.

The States relied upon him to disconcert, by the speedy conclusion of peace, the secret projects of alliance between the two kings of France and England. While the English ambassadors endeavoured to throw suspicion on the Grand Pensionary by accusing him of complicity with the King of France, who, they said, 'would make him Count of Guelders as soon as he had conquered the Spanish Netherlands,' they themselves showed the greatest eagerness to come to an agreement with the French negotiators. The envoys of Louis XIV. responded by encouragements to these advances. They exhorted the plenipotentiaries of Charles to maintain the pretensions of England, while they dissuaded those of the United Provinces from yielding on any point. These intrigues were not difficult to discover, and had roused the mistrust of the Dutch ambassadors who imparted their suspicions to the States-General. 'Those persons who are most in credit at the Hague,' owned Count d'Estrades, 'apprehend that peace may be followed by a close union between France and England.' John de Witt on his side writes to Beverningh: 'From the information that I receive and from my own personal opinion, I believe that we have no assistance to expect from France towards the success of the negotiations; but I cannot yet believe that they will use treachery and make a treaty without us; we may, however, act as if the French might be capable of such an infamy, and we will do so accordingly, for it is my fixed rule always to be prepared for the worst.'

To baffle these manœuvres, the plenipotentiaries of the States sought to obtain the conclusion of peace by the most sincere and urgently made offers. They proposed that the

belligerent powers should have the choice, either of recovering all that belonged to them before the war, or of keeping what they had now got, and renouncing all previous claims. The English envoys accepted this last offer, but refused to accede to the subjoined condition. They wished to reserve to the King of England the right of renewing the disputes which had served as a pretext for the rupture of the last treaty, and thus to secure him an opportunity for recommencing hostilities whenever he chose. They added to their demands that of an amnesty which should allow the accomplices of Buat to return to Holland, and proposed thus to encourage fresh intrigues against the government of the States. Their objections made the conferences useless, and might give rise to fears that they would soon be broken off. To this policy of intentional delays and premeditated ill-will, the Grand Pensionary resolved to oppose a bold stroke which overwhelmed England under the burden of an unforeseen disaster and enabled the United Provinces to conquer peace by victory.

While the King of England, giving himself up to a fallacious security, was reducing his fleet to a peace footing, and dismantling a part of his ships, the States-General, with more foresight, had taken measures for the possibility of a renewal of the war, without taking any notice of the negotiations. De Witt had urged them to provide for the cost of another campaign, towards which fifteen millions of florins were furnished to the admiralties. The States of Holland undertook to provide eight millions of this sum. To meet this increase of their contribution they could no longer have recourse to loans, which, since the beginning of the war had exceeded twelve millions of florins. The sale of some lands did not produce sufficient for their wants. They could no longer spare the taxpayers, and, consequently, reimposed the tax upon capital to the amount of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., raised the income-tax from 10 to 15 per cent., and doubled the chimney-tax. The generous eagerness of the town councils, who, following the example given by Amsterdam, offered to advance the amount of their contributions to the public treasury at their own cost, came to their aid most usefully.

Thanks to the employment of these resources, the fleet which was ready to put to sea consisted of 66 ships carrying 3,300 guns. It had on board 28 companies of foot equipped for a landing, and employed in its service several English pilots—deserters—who had been carefully enlisted in view of a maritime invasion of England. The Grand Pensionary had been long meditating such a step. During the preceding year he had pushed as far as the mouth of the Thames in order to reconnoitre the channels which might be passable for the Dutch ships and would thus enable them to destroy a part of the English fleet; he had, besides, urged Ruyter to prepare the means necessary for the execution of this project. As soon as the equipments were completed, he easily obtained orders for the departure of the Dutch squadron from the Texel.

Himself prevented from leaving the Hague, where he was detained by the necessity of watching the negotiations, he sent in his stead his brother Cornelius, whom the States of Holland appointed as their plenipotentiary with the admiral. The instructions for the offensive character of the expedition were drawn up secretly in the committee of deputies in charge of naval affairs, to whom the States-General had transferred their authority. John de Witt took care that they should not be divulged; writing to his brother he desired him 'not to address to the States any letter concerning the proposed expedition without giving him preliminary information.'

When the fleet had arrived at the mouth of the Thames, off Harwich, a council of war was held. It decided that a squadron of thirty vessels, comprising seventeen line-of-battle ships carrying from thirty to sixty guns, and thirteen frigates accompanied by ten fireships, should be despatched against the English ships stationed in the Thames and in one of its affluents, the river Medway. The command was given to Lieutenant-Admiral Van Ghent; and Cornelius de Witt, jealous of sharing his perils, claimed the right to accompany him.

The squadron detailed for the service sailed up the Thames beyond Gravesend, but without overtaking the English ships which retreated towards London, and seized the fort of

Sheerness, which commands the junction of the two rivers. After a heavy cannonading they then took possession of the Isle of Sheppey, victoriously entered the Medway and sailed up to Rochester, thirty miles from London. The object of the expedition was Chatham, the principal arsenal of England, where the largest men-of-war in the English navy were lying at anchor half-dismantled. They seemed secure here from all dangers. Batteries on both banks of the Medway—the fire from which was supported by companies of fusiliers—four line-of-battle ships and two frigates ready for action, two large vessels and four fireships sunk in the stream, and only leaving open a narrow channel closed by an iron chain, opposed apparently insurmountable obstacles to any attack. Ruyter, who had overtaken in his launch the van of his squadron, gave the signal for their removal. The Dutch fleet, contenting themselves with keeping up their fire, had not ventured to advance, till Captain Van Brakel, undeterred by the risk of the attempt, took upon himself boldly to force a passage. He had been placed under arrest for having allowed some of his crew to land, but begged permission to return on board his frigate, promising to undertake the destruction of the enemy's ships. He was not to be stopped by the fire from either batteries or ships; without firing a shot, he sailed close up to the chain, and then, suddenly discharging a broadside at the nearest frigate, boarded and took possession of her. At the same time Captain Daniel van Rhein, who had followed him with a fireship, encouraged by his example, forced his vessel against the chain, broke it, and set fire to one of the enemy's ships which had been protected by it. The passage being thus open, the other frigates, carried forward by an irresistible impulse, advanced impetuously, silenced the fire from the shore batteries, and took advantage of the enemy's confusion to complete the success of the day. A second line-of-battle ship was fired, whose captain, the valiant Douglas, refused to forsake her; and the 'Royal Charles,' the flagship of the Duke of York, which had carried Charles II. back to England, abandoned by her crew, fell into the hands of the conquerors.

To complete the victory, the seven frigates that drew least water, commanded by chosen captains, sailed still higher up the river, and burnt under the very guns of Upnor Castle, four other ships which had taken refuge there. These orders were carried out with the most daring gallantry under the eyes of Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter, who had followed on board a fireship, and in view of the Duke of York and Monk, despairing spectators of the disaster. Only one ship escaped, and the English, not having succeeded in time in sinking the other three, which were all flagships, they were fired by the Dutch, whilst a body of sailors was landed, who took possession of the batteries, spiked the guns, and destroyed all materials which could be of use in the equipment of a fleet.

Terror spread even to London, where the sinister sound of the enemy's guns, heard at a distance of twenty-five miles, was listened to for the first and last time. Business was suspended; the populace—out of work—assembled in the streets crying 'treason.' 'The distraction and consternation of the court and city,' writes a contemporary, 'was as great as if the Dutch had not only been masters of the Thames, but had really landed an army of 100,000 men. There seemed nothing to be done but to await the arrival of the enemy without any hope of resistance remaining. The Republic of the United Provinces thus avenged itself for the alarms created by the landing of the English at the Texel, and repaired almost in a single day the misfortunes of which she had been the victim through the war.

While this victory was being celebrated in the United Provinces by religious thanksgivings and with all the outward signs of patriotic joy, the Grand Pensionary seemed impatient for new successes which might allow the destruction of the English fleet to be completed. With this object he demanded the often vainly promised assistance of the naval forces of France. As soon as he learned the happy result of the expedition, he urged the ambassador, D'Estrades, to decide the King of France to place at the service of the republic some fireships that had been built for him at Amsterdam, by sending them as reinforcements to the Dutch

fleet, which was insufficiently provided with them. Louis XIV. evaded the request; he was too much interested in keeping on terms with the King of England to assist the United Provinces in crushing him. He contented himself with announcing that his admiral, the Duke de Beaufort, had received a copy of the new convention already agreed to for the junction of the two fleets, with orders to act accordingly. But Lionne was not afraid to own that the orders had been countermanded, in the expectation that peace would be soon concluded, and the Duke de Beaufort continued for two months longer patiently to await the end of the war in the port of Brest.

Other disappointments put obstacles in the way of the plan whose execution the Grand Pensionary still obstinately persisted in. The undertaking which had just been so gloriously accomplished had, until now, justified the bold advice he had given to his brother. When the fleet had sailed from the Dutch ports, he had carefully pointed out to him, with the most minute detail, the means of entering the Thames and the Medway. Some days afterwards, in a letter which crossed on its road the news of the victory of Chatham, making use of the secret advices he received from England, he pointed out to him the enemy's ships which might be taken or destroyed. When he saw that his previsions had been justified, his only fear was of delay in the final blows that he desired to inflict upon the enemy. 'If the only difficulty lies in contrary winds,' he wrote to his brother, 'you must take to the oars to advance. In any case I depend so much upon your determination of character that I am sure that everything possible will be attempted, and in the state of consternation in which England now is, nothing is difficult to a force so formidable as that at your command. It must not be said hereafter: *Vincere scit, victoria uti nescit*—"He knows how to conquer, he knows not how to profit by victory."' The States-General shared in the inspiration of this bold policy. They had just learnt that the expeditionary squadron, finding no more of the enemy's ships within reach, and made uneasy by the assembling of the militia summoned from all quarters

to repel a landing, had left the Thames. Displeased at this retreat, they sent orders to it 'to re-enter the river and advance as far as possible up stream, and thus to keep the enemy in continual alarm.' John de Witt accompanied this despatch by a letter addressed to his brother, in which he seems to find fault with the indecision which checked the prompt execution of his recommendations. 'I hope,' he wrote, 'that the officers in command, having seen that undertakings long deemed impossible are altogether practicable, will prove henceforth the more disposed to make further attempts, even if they may appear to them somewhat difficult. The commissioners of the States for naval affairs pray God to inspire with such zeal and forwardness all officers, both of land and sea, who are with you, that you may have to restrain their ardour.' In a subsequent letter he blamed his brother for asking for orders from the States-General, instead of giving them himself, by making use of the full powers entrusted to him, and expressed an impatience which took heed of no obstacles. 'We cannot understand,' he wrote again, 'why our superior officers, who should surpass you in courage and resolution, cannot fall in with your ideas, and why our ships remain inactive.'

The presence of the Grand Pensionary with the fleet was wanting. His brother could not replace him, he was too much accustomed to obey his instructions to be able himself to take the lead. Embarrassed by the different orders he received he did not venture to supplement them by a prompt determination, and his courage could not supply the place of the missing authority. In obedience to the orders he had received, Ruyter resumed the offensive, but his efforts were vain to inflict on the enemy fresh losses which might have completed their ruin. He did not venture to advance as far as the coast of Scotland, in spite of the possibly rash advice of John de Witt, who urged him to attack the port of Montrose, so as to raise a false alarm by the aid of which he might then fall upon Leith and Edinburgh, which were unfurnished with troops. To satisfy the States-General he attempted to re-enter the Thames, but found that he could not without risk ascend the stream above

Gravesend, as the English had blocked the channel below London by sinking several ships. He contented himself with leaving a squadron under the command of Lieutenant-Admiral Van Nès, at the junction of the Thames and the Medway, so as to prevent all exit from the river, and set to work to search out the enemy's ships in all the neighbouring ports. The attack which he attempted upon Harwich on leaving the Thames not having succeeded, he appeared successively before Portsmouth, Dartmouth, Torbay, and Plymouth, and advanced to the furthest point of the south coast. But the winds were contrary, the harbours had been fortified and rendered inaccessible, and all the success of the enterprise reduced itself to a landing at Torbay, where some merchant vessels were burnt. During this expedition the squadron under Van Nès was very near being destroyed; he had had to repulse two attacks in which the enemy's fireships had placed him in danger, and when Ruyter returned he had quitted the Thames, which he continued to blockade, but only by anchoring at the mouth of the river.

Although the latest attempts had not entirely fulfilled the hopes of the Grand Pensionary, the success of this naval campaign, so boldly won, could not fail to hasten the completion of the negotiations. The pride of England had been lowered: formerly sovereign of the seas, she had been reduced to the inability of preventing an invasion of her territories, and her fleets flying before the enemy's ships had been unable to defend her. She had been humbled by a republic whom Charles's ministers had boasted 'that they would chastise with rods,' and the conflagration of her ships made it dangerous to prolong any further the resistance they had till now opposed to the conclusion of peace. At the first news of the resumption of hostilities the ambassadors of Charles II., supported by the French ambassadors, had, it is true, proudly declared that they only remained at Breda to await their letters of recall; but the disaster which dealt so fatal a blow to the maritime power of England forced them to conceal their resentment. They received instructions to hasten forward the negotiations, and thus to obtain peace without delay. The States on their

side were not disposed to abuse their victory. The Grand Pensionary, notwithstanding the warm encouragement he had given to the late expedition, had never lost sight of the idea 'that its special object was the speedy termination of the war!' Faithfully interpreting his brother's views, Cornelius de Witt, not yielding to any warlike impulses, wrote in these words to the States-General, the very evening of the fight, on board the Royal Charles, the trophy of their victory: 'We render thanks to Almighty God, that it has pleased His Providence to confer such glory on the arms of their High Mightinesses, and we cannot doubt that, to their great contentment, peace will be obtained.'

It could not indeed be delayed without fatally compromising the interests of their foreign policy. The invasion of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis XIV. had just startled the United Provinces. As long as they were at war with England, they could not attempt to check the conquests of the King of France, and, in order not to be reduced to the impossibility of opposing them, the States-General were the more urgent to hasten the conclusion of the negotiations. Their moderation completed the work begun by victory, and the persevering efforts of Beverningh, which won for him the most flattering expressions of satisfaction, removed the last obstacles. 'It was with regret that I saw my country dragged into a baleful war,' wrote De Witt to the minister plenipotentiary of the Emperor of Germany, 'and it is therefore with extreme satisfaction that I see her issue from it, both on account of the repose she will enjoy, and because I hope that this particular peace will be a step towards a general peace throughout Europe.'

The envoys of Charles II. who wished to appear to cede nothing to contrary fortune, having renewed some of their original pretensions, the envoys of the States did not take advantage of this to oppose fresh demands; they confined themselves to their first proposals, unchanged by the success of the late expedition. These proposals, hitherto rejected by the King of England, formed the articles of the Peace of Breda, signed by the belligerent parties through the mediation of Sweden on July 31, 1667, and ratified a month later. They

mutually acknowledged all the conquests which had belonged to each before the war. England retained New Amsterdam or New York, and New Jersey in America. The United Provinces obtained the restitution of the colony of Surinam which they had lost, and although they had formerly promised to restore to England the island of Pouleron, one of the Moluccas and perhaps the wealthiest colony belonging to the India Company, they now retained this, alleging that they had never given up its possession.

The King of England renounced also all the claims which had served as pretexts for war. He gave way on some points of the Navigation Act, and allowed Dutch merchantmen to convey to England the products of the soil of the republic, as well as the merchandise of Germany and the Low Countries. He even consented to renew the treaty of commerce which the States had obtained with such difficulty five years previously, and had hardly had time to profit by. He insisted, however, on the saluting of the English flag, but the States would only undertake to comply with this demand towards ships of war, and that only in British waters, with the proviso that it was only accorded as a mark of courtesy. They hoped thus to secure themselves against insulting demands, which might after a few years' interval provoke a fresh rupture. The envoys of the King of England signed two other treaties on the same day, one with France and one with Denmark. By the first, Charles restored to Louis Nova Scotia, and recovered possession of a part of the Antilles. By the second treaty he secured to the King of Denmark a share in the benefits of his alliance with the States-General, and declared that he resumed his former amicable relations with him.

The Peace of Breda, thus imposed upon England by a victorious expedition, was a title of glory for the republic, of which the Grand Pensionary of Holland had a right to be proud. He received on all hands congratulations which appeared to embarrass his modesty, and to which he replied by declaring 'that he had no other merit than that of ardent and unfailing zeal in his country's service.' If he prided himself upon anything, it was on the renown that she had

acquired. 'I assured you in December of last year,' he writes to a friend, 'that I considered it as certain that within two years the United Provinces would be in a better position and held in higher consideration than ever before. I am confident that you will be of opinion with me that this prediction is accomplished, since firstly, by the blessing of God, the forces of this State have penetrated to the heart of the enemy's country and have obtained so glorious a victory over him; and secondly, by the grasp of this State, as it were, upon his throat, he has been reduced to consent to a peace such as was yesterday concluded at Breda with conditions which it has been hitherto impossible to exact.'

The news of the signature of the treaty was received with manifestations of joy in the United Provinces. Free expression was given to popular satisfaction and patriotic pride. Numerous medals were issued in commemoration of a peace so gloriously obtained. That which the States-General caused to be struck represented on the reverse Concord holding in one hand a cornucopia with this motto: *Irato bellum, placato numine pax est* ('When God is angry, there is war; when He is appeased, there is peace'). There was this inscription besides: *Rediit concordia mater. Breda*, 1667 ('Concord like a mother has returned to us'). On the face, Concord, in the guise of Minerva, holding the seven arrows, which were the arms of the United Provinces, attached to her lance with a lion and a lamb at her side, was represented crushing Discord with this device: *Mitis et fortis* ('Gentle and strong'). In the distance were seen ships in flames and a village on fire, and over the head of Discord these words were to be read: *Procul hinc mala bestia regnis* ('Away with the monster so fatal to nations!').

The publication of the peace was made in state at Breda, before the doors of the ambassadors' houses and in front of the town-hall. In the evening the ambassadors of England, France, and Denmark set conduits of wine flowing in the public squares. A bonfire was lighted in front of the town-hall, and the deputies of the States gave a great collation there to which all the maidens of the town were invited.

'We drank *sommetjes* with them, as healths are called here,' wrote D'Estrades, 'and this is how it is done; wine and sugar are put into a glass, the girl first drinks a mouthful, then returns the glass to whoever offered it to her and kisses him on the mouth; the man does the same thing in turn, and so on till there is not a drop of wine left in the glass. This continues far into the night.' At the Hague, the Grand Pensionary gave a sumptuous banquet, and during a part of the night the townspeople, in whose amusements he joined, danced and sang before his house. It is interesting to learn the opinion he expressed upon these pomps and rejoicings. After the festivities held in honour of the victory of Chatham some months previously, he wrote to Beverningh: 'I know that those public illuminations cause a good deal of excess and imply a good deal of pride; but as they are also the means to impress upon the people the idea of benefits received from God, and to induce them to take more interest in the successes obtained, I have thought that this last success above all deserves these manifestations of public joy.'

The States-General and the States of Holland did not forget the victors. They successively congratulated both Cornelius de Witt and Ruyter. The States of Holland, in order to perpetuate the memory of the service they had rendered to the republic in the last expedition, presented to them, as well as to Van Ghent, magnificent gold cups, valued at 5,000 florins each: these were adorned with medallion paintings in enamel, representing the attack on the fort at Sheerness, and the taking and firing of the English ships near Chatham and Upnor; the stand was engraved with festoons of flowers, and on the cover was a red lion, the emblem of the arms of the province. The States of Holland did not consider this gift a sufficient recompense for Cornelius de Witt. The following year a proposal was made to buy him an estate—the manor of Spikenisse—but was not favourably received. Notwithstanding the persistent disapproval of some deputies, he received, however, an annuity of 30,000 florins. The Grand Pensionary, who had carefully abstained from intervening in the debates, did not conceal his satisfaction at these

expressions of gratitude, which he considered fully justified. He writes to Valkenier, one of the deputies of Amsterdam, 'that the great constancy and inflexible will of his brother had won for the States the success of the expedition which had been, by the grace of God, the instrument of victory and consequently of peace.' The Council of Dordrecht, of which Cornelius de Witt was burgomaster, was foremost in rendering him the honours which were his due. They commissioned John de Baan, one of the first painters of the country, to execute his portrait; two years later the picture, splendidly framed, was received in state and placed in the great room of the town-hall. Cornelius de Witt was represented on the bank of a river on which were the English ships in flames, his baton of command in his hand, and a cornucopia beside him, to symbolise the blessings of peace for which the United Provinces were indebted to him. The inscription adorning the picture recalled 'to all generations to come, the exploits of the great citizen who in an heroic expedition had destroyed the most powerful ships of England in the very rivers of the hostile kingdom, had taken from her the empire of the seas and forced her to make peace.' The return of Cornelius to his native town had the splendour of a triumph. When he drew near Dordrecht in his boat, he was greeted by salutes from the guns and salvos from the burgher guard, while the trumpets blew a blast. When he landed at the quay the magistrates came forward to meet and congratulate him, and, followed by all the inhabitants, accompanied him to his own house. In the evening the town was illuminated, and the next day a thanksgiving sermon was solemnly preached in his honour.

Public opinion encouraged these marks of consideration. The poets of Holland, and especially those of Dordrecht—amongst others P. Godewyck, the former tutor of the two brothers—vied with each other in publishing praises of John and Cornelius de Witt, to which were joined those of Ruyter, as may be seen in a contemporary collection. Vondel wrote songs of triumph in their honour. The learned Jacques Leydius, pastor of Dordrecht, obedient to the same inspiration, published shortly afterwards his fine Latin work entitled

'Belgium gloriosum'—'The glory of Holland'—in which he recalled, with rare elegance of language and often with eloquence equal to the great writers of antiquity, the successes of the republic and the happy conduct of the late war, and allotted the principal merit to the Grand Pensionary and his brother, whom he called 'the good geniuses of the State.'

This prosperity, brilliant as it seemed, could not deceive John de Witt, neither was he permitted the satisfaction of enjoying it at leisure. Dangers, which were constantly renewed, menaced the independence of the republic, forced to defend herself alternately against her powerful neighbours. Peace with England was hardly concluded, when already a rupture with France seemed imminent.

CHAPTER VII.

RESISTANCE OF THE UNITED PROVINCES TO FRANCE—INVASION OF THE NETHERLANDS BY LOUIS XIV.—THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE—GREAT DIPLOMATIC VICTORY.

Louis XIV.'s projects of territorial aggrandisement—The death of Philip IV. determines him to put them in execution—Resources of France—Exhaustion of Spain—Diplomatic Controversy—'The Buckler of State and of Justice,' published by Lisola—Invasion of the Netherlands—Their rapid submission—Uneasiness of the United Provinces—The promises of agreement violated—Negotiations of Louis XIV. with Europe—Isolation of the States-General—Dangers of a rupture with France—De Witt endeavours to bring about an agreement to prevent the annexation of the Netherlands to France—Louis XIV. modifies his demands, but refuses to give guarantees if the war recommences—Negotiations of the United Provinces with Sweden and England—Sweden detached from France—The King of England is obliged to yield to public opinion, by renewing intercourse with the States-General—Temple's Mission to the Hague—Agreement between Temple and De Witt—Conditional adhesion of Sweden—Signing of the Triple Alliance—Secret articles—Consequences of the Treaty—Public rejoicings—Deception of Louis XIV.—His secret treaty with the Emperor for the division of the Spanish Monarchy—Renewal of hostilities—Franche-Comté conquered in a fortnight—Louis XIV. reassured as to the Triple Alliance by communications from Count d'Estrades and by the tact of John de Witt—Van Beuningen's new embassy—Spain is compelled to accept Louis XIV.'s offers—She consents to give up to him his conquests in the Netherlands—Irritation of the King of France on hearing of the Secret Articles of the Triple Alliance—His attempts to divide the allies—Energetic policy of the States inspired by De Witt—They secure co-operation of Sweden by forcing Spain to pay subsidies to her—Their equipments—They guarantee peace—The extension of the truce—Final difficulties overcome—The congress and the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle—New diplomatic situation of the Republic—A change of Alliances—The United Provinces the arbitrators of Europe.[1]

THE invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV. placed the States-General under the necessity of choosing between the

[1] The principal work consulted for this chapter is *Négociations relatives à la Succession d'Espagne*, by M. Mignet, vol. ii., Part 3, Section 2, and Part 4, Sections 1 and 2; the documents found there being supplemented by the Archives of the Hague, and by the able memoir of M. Combes (1864) on the unpublished French correspondence between John de Witt and Sir William Temple, relative to the Triple Alliance.

alliance and the proximity of France. The Grand Pensionary had foreseen this dire extremity. When he received at his house some years previously the Cardinal de Retz, then exiled from France, he had foretold the events which already appeared to him inevitable, saying that, whatever pains he might take to maintain the friendship between the republic and the King of France, it was evident that she would be forced to oppose him and lay herself open to his resentment.

Louis XIV. was on the verge of provoking this crisis. He had taken up with the ardent ambition of a conqueror the projects of aggrandisement which Mazarin had bequeathed to him, and which were destined, by the annexations of the possessions remaining to Spain in the north of his kingdom, to insure the preponderance of France in Europe. The death of Philip IV. gave him the pretext for which he was waiting publicly to announce his claims, and it would have needed but little to induce him to enforce them at once by violence.

Nevertheless, after much hesitation, as testified by his memoirs, he seemed willing to content himself with diplomatic measures to obtain satisfaction; but the court of Madrid having given him to understand that it could not entertain them, he made arrangements to conquer the inheritance which he coveted. The war between England and the United Provinces seemed to favour the execution of his projects: 'the two neighbours most concerned in the defence of the Netherlands being deep in a quarrel between themselves.' He would not, therefore, wait for the conclusion of peace to commence his enterprise, but resolved to precipitate it, profiting by the exhaustion of the two rival powers.

The prosperity of France and the exhaustion of Spain left him at liberty to hazard anything. The state of the revenues, and of the army and navy under the direction of such ministers as Colbert, Lionne, and Louvois, left nothing to be desired.

Order had been re-established in the finances under the energetic administration of Colbert, and the receipts nearly doubled although the taxes had been reduced. 'The revenues are sufficient for all expenses,' writes the ambassador of the States, 'the farming is so much improved that it brings two

millions a month into the king's treasury and the "Taille" thirty-two millions a year.' The increase of the public revenues, which had risen to ninety-five millions, had tended to encourage trade and commerce, whilst it had developed the military power of the kingdom. The navy had acquired an importance hitherto unknown. Lionne, to whose department it belonged, had given it full play. In 1667, it consisted of 110 ships carrying 3,713 guns, and manned with 21,915 men, exclusive of officers. The land force, disciplined, organised, and equipped by Louvois, 'the Colbert of war,' had been considerably increased. It consisted of 72,000 men, divided into 600 companies of infantry, and 120 troops of cavalry. The French guard, and the Swiss, gave them in addition a picked body of 6,500 foot soldiers; and the king's household, including the body-guard and the musketeers, with the gendarmes and the light cavalry, furnished a reserve of about 2,000 men. The improvement of the infantry arms and the construction of some powerful artillery also contributed to prepare for the success of a new war.

In view of the expedition which he was meditating, Louis XIV. had collected 50,000 men in the two provinces nearest to the Netherlands and counted thus upon an easy victory.

The skilful direction given to French diplomacy by Lionne enabled the King of France to lay down the law for Europe, which seemed resigned to accept it. The Pope, Alexander VII., himself set the example of submission. Not having made what appeared a sufficient reparation for the violence offered to the Duke de Créquy, the French ambassador, by the Corsican guard, he only avoided an occupation of Rome by the French troops, by humbly submitting to such atonement as was imposed upon him. Leopold, Emperor of Germany, threatened by an invasion of the Turks, owed the safety of Austria only to a French army corps which arrested the Ottoman conquest by the glorious victory of St. Gothard. As to the King of England, Charles II., Louis XIV. had nothing to fear from his enterprises, since he had obtained from him at the cost of five millions the sale of Dunkirk, one

of the keys of France; and the war which he had declared against him, in favour of the United Provinces, was too harmless to provoke his resentment. All obstacles which might have been opposed to the conquests of the French king were henceforth removed.

Spain had lost what France gained. 'Tis like a great old tree which has lost its branches and leaves, *et trunco non frondibus efficit umbram*,' writes a diplomatist of the time. She had worn herself out in the sanguinary and obstinate war, which she had maintained against the United Provinces to keep them under her yoke, and had spent upon it nearly eighty millions stirling. Her revenues, far from sufficing for her expenses, did not exceed eighteen million reals, in spite of the wealth she drew from America, and only brought twelve millions into the treasury. Her frontiers were exposed to the enemy, her fortified towns were in bad condition without garrisons or provisions, her fleets had vanished from the seas, her dockyards were empty. Trade had fallen off in the towns, while the fields remained uncultivated. Spain was, as it were, buried alive. 'It is impossible that, in such a condition, the kingdom should last another century,' was the verdict of the first Cortes, assembled by Philip IV.; and one of the councillors of the regent, the Duke Medina de la Torrés, said in the council, 'If in the past we could plume ourselves on being conquerors, we are now in danger of being conquered.' The death of Philip IV., by exposing Spain to fresh dangers, reduced the Spanish monarchy to the last extremity. Philip IV., who had allowed it to go to ruin in his feeble hands, left as his successor a child of four, so fragile that it had not seemed likely to survive him. His natural son, Don John, who had distinguished himself at the head of the Spanish army in Italy and Flanders, had fallen into disgrace; it was therefore to Philip's widow, Queen Maria Anne of Austria, sister of the German Emperor Leopold, that the regency was confided.

He had instituted for her assistance a council or junta of regency, composed of six members; the Count of Castrillo, president of Castille, justiciary of the kingdom; Don Christoval

Crespi, Vice-Chancellor of Aragon; the Cardinal of Sandoval, Archbishop of Toledo; the Cardinal of Aragon, Inquisitor-General; the Marquis d'Ayetona, representing the grandees of Spain; and the Count de Peñeranda, Councillor of State. The first act of the Regent was to appoint a new councillor, her confessor, Father Nithard. She obliged the Cardinal of Aragon to give up to him the office of Inquisitor-General, and soon gave him the direction of the government, although he had none of the qualities which would have fitted him to be prime minister.

The Netherlands was the possession of the Spanish monarchy which was chiefly threatened. Having no efficient support to hope for from Spain, they could offer no opposition to any aggression. The governors who had succeeded one another since the Archduke Leopold had either been unable to put the country in a state of defence, or had neglected to provide for its security. The Marquis de Castel-Rodrigo, appointed three years before, had bravely set to work to extricate them from this embarrassment, and to resist the French invasion which he foresaw. Nevertheless, in spite of the demands for money and troops which he never ceased to make to Madrid, he had but twenty thousand men at his command, distributed amongst all the garrisons, and could only count for support upon the German regiments furnished by the Court of Vienna. 'If the French attack us in the spring,' he writes, 'I see nothing short of a miracle which can save these provinces.'

Too confident in his own courage and activity, Castel-Rodrigo thought he could dispense with allies. Believing himself to be equal to the public demands, in spite of the gout which frequently confined him to his room, he was jealous of possessing the whole authority in political as well as in military affairs. He thus deprived himself of the aid of the Prince de Ligne, the greatest noble of the Netherlands, whose disgrace had turned the Flemish nobility against him. He had also hitherto held at arm's-length the only clever and experienced officer at the disposal of Spain—the Count de Marsin, a former companion in arms and lieutenant of Condé,

alienated by the Fronde from the service of France, and to whom the Court of Madrid had confided the command of the troops in the Netherlands. The Spanish province thus abandoned seemed a prey offered to the first comer. Spain at this juncture had found two diplomatic defenders of her cause: one in her own service, the other in the service of the Emperor of Germany—Don Estevan de Gamarra and Baron Lisola. Don Estevan de Gamarra, Spanish ambassador at the Hague, had held the principal military commands in the Spanish armies. He had been raised to the rank of Major-General, and had been made governor of the citadel of Ghent. Sought after and appreciated as a negotiator, he was aided by a great affability of character, and much acuteness of mind. 'His cheerful and open disposition made all intercourse with him pleasant and agreeable,' wrote a French ambassador who had known him well, 'and however much our interests were opposed, we lived together in perfect freedom and intimacy.' But he had not hitherto been able to turn the course of events, and had made vain efforts to wean the United Provinces from the French Alliance.

François de Lisola also gave proofs of rare energy and activity, joined to great talents as a writer. He was born in 1613 at Salins in Franche-Comté, and was therefore a Spanish subject, but in his early youth he entered the service of the Emperor of Germany, who, after having employed him in the most important negotiations, sent him in turns as ambassador to London and to the Hague, giving him the title of Baron. He had early drawn attention to the dangers of the French power, and had confided his apprehensions to the Grand Pensionary of Holland, thus entering upon the path which he followed to the end of his life: that of a resolute and determined adversary of the domination with which Louis XIV. threatened Europe. Kept informed by secret communications which he had contrived with all the courts, even with that of Louis XIV., of all the projects and manœuvres of French diplomacy, he did not have recourse to futile intrigues to baffle them. His plan, which he carried out, was that of a coalition against France.

The cry of alarm which was raised on the publication of his first pamphlet, 'The Buckler of the State and of Justice,' successively translated into all languages, made a great sensation. He published it in answer to a manifesto entitled, 'Treatise on the rights of His Most Christian Majesty over the divers States of the Spanish Monarchy,' which Louis XIV. had just published. Renouncing all concealment, the King of France audaciously asserted the right of the Queen his wife, not only to profit by the law of devolution, by which she would receive a portion of Philip IV.'s inheritance, comprising the greater part of the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, and Luxembourg, but also, in the event of the death of Charles II., to the inheritance of her brother's kingdom, in spite of the renunciation which she had made of her claim to the succession. To dismember the Spanish monarchy before it fell vacant, and to possess himself of it when Charles II. should have ceased to live, was the insatiable ambition of Louis XIV.—who threw down the gauntlet, as it were, to Spain and Europe. Lisola made a decided repudiation of these claims, in which he put forth all his legal knowledge and controversial eloquence in the service of a righteous cause. His memorial, which does honour to the political literature of the time, broke down all Louis XIV.'s arguments, and victoriously put an end to all controversy on the subject. Lisola contested as unjustifiable all claim on the part of the King of France to extend the law of inheritance of paternal property, as applying to the children of a first marriage, to the sovereignty of the state. He proved by incontrovertible arguments that the law of devolution could not legally avail the Queen of France as daughter of Philip IV.'s first wife, but must remain exclusively applicable in civil cases. He finally laid it down that the Netherlands being united to Spain, where the law of devolution was unknown, must be subject to the law of that kingdom, and he ingeniously pleaded in favour of his argument the Salic Law, which in France superseded all others; so much so that none of the provinces successively united to the crown could be again detached, in spite of any rights of which the daughters might

otherwise have availed themselves. He wound up with the reminder, made with the authority of good faith, that the Queen's formal renunciation had been the condition of the Peace of the Pyrenees, and that to refuse to recognise its validity would be to infringe all principles of public rights. He pointed out plainly that Louis XIV. was engaging in no civil action, but was only seeking some pretext for the violation of a treaty. 'The course of a lawsuit,' he said, 'did not allow of warfare, contracts were never fought out with the sword, nor a first summons made with forty thousand men. But it is only too clear that the King of France wishes for no arbitration but that of arms; he makes his throne a tribunal, and his soldiers judges.' Lisola wound up his memorial by pointing out without any reservation the danger of conquest which threatened all courts and all people. 'Let us then make common cause,' he adds, 'and not put all our faith in the favour of the Cyclops; which only profited Ulysses by an unhoped-for piece of luck.' He thus appealed beforehand to the European league, which was later to serve as a barrier to the encroachments of Louis XIV.

But until this appeal was responded to, diplomatic memorials would do little for the defence of Spain—Lisola's answer to the manifesto of the King of France was not published before Louis XIV. had recourse to arms. His military preparations being finished, the pacific assurances with which he had up to the last hour deluded the Spanish Government, seemed to be no longer necessary. As soon therefore as an order only was required for his troops to cross the frontier of the Netherlands, he sent notice directly to the Queen-Regent of his intention of occupying before the end of May the provinces which he claimed in the name of the Infanta Maria Theresa, his wife. The only course left open to the Spanish Court to avoid spoliation was a voluntary abandonment. 'Here is a change of scene,' writes Lionne to the Archbishop of Embrun, the French ambassador at Madrid, 'which will make some disturbance in your court.' While Philip IV.'s widow to try to gain time declared herself 'ready to seek means of accommodation,' the King of France had rejoined his

army, which he had placed under the command of Turenne, and four days before the end of May he entered the Netherlands as a conqueror.

To reassure Europe, Louis XIV. spoke of his invasion as a journey which he was undertaking to enter into possession of the countries belonging to him. He made preparations as for a festival, and at the head-quarters at Amiens, where the Queen had come to join him, to show herself to her new subjects, the reviews were intermingled with grand balls at which the royal tent was arranged like a reception-room at Versailles.

Nevertheless no military precautions had been neglected. Two divisions, each of eight thousand men, had been detached to resist any opposition, one under the command of Marshal d'Aumont between Lys and the sea, the other under the orders of the Marquis de Créquy on the frontier of Germany; and it was with the third corps, thirty-five thousand strong, that the King of France opened the campaign. He misled the enemy by moving towards Charleroi, which had been evacuated, and by threatening Brussels, so as to oblige the Marquis Castel-Rodrigo to recall his best regiments for the defence of the capital of the Netherlands. This feigned attack having attained the proposed end, Louis XIV. suddenly turned towards the Scheldt, and two weeks sufficed for the Flemish fortresses of Ath, Tournay, Douai, Courtray, and Oudenarde to fall into his hands after a defence more apparent than real. The inundation of the approach to Dendermonde having saved that place, which was the key to Brussels, Ghent, and Malines, the royal army arrested its victorious march, and redescending the course of the Scheldt, besieged Lille, where it was joined by the division under Marshal d'Aumont.

Lille was defended by a garrison of two thousand five hundred foot and six to seven hundred horse, commanded by brave and able officers, and by fifteen hundred of the burgher guard, who had promised the governor, Count de Brouay, to stand by him to the last. They were, moreover, expecting help from an army corps of twelve thousand men collected at

Ypres by the Count de Marsin, to whom the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo had made a tardy appeal. But the work of investment under the direction of Vauban was conducted with such activity that the hopes of the besieged were shattered. A week sufficed to open a double line of trenches; at the end of a fortnight the two demi-lunes which stood in the way of an assault were carried after an obstinate resistance, and the townspeople, faithless to their oath, called upon the governor to surrender. Upon his refusal, the people ran to the ramparts, stopped the firing, and Lille opened her gates to the King of France, who made a triumphal entry. The Spanish cavalry, which the Count de Marsin had brought up for the succour of the besieged city, only arrived to see the fall of the town, and, after a futile attempt at resistance, was dispersed and driven back with great loss on the frontier of the United Provinces.

Louis XIV. thus made himself master of a line of places which, strengthened by Vauban, would give France what he called 'her iron frontier.' Notwithstanding her late preparations for defence, Spain seemed incapable of disputing with him that part of the Netherlands which he had not yet conquered. Leaving the army under the command of Turenne, he rejoined the Queen, who had preceded him to Arras, and went with her to Saint Germain in the beginning of September, 'accompanied by the acclamations of his people, and the admiration of the entire kingdom.'

Notwithstanding the iniquity of an enterprise in whose favour only legal subtleties could be invoked, Louis XIV. had, in executing the great designs of Henry IV. and Richelieu, made use of his ambition for the furthering of the power and glory of France.

This conquest, threatening for Europe, was still more to be dreaded by the Republic of the United Provinces. It placed it, according to Van Beuningen, in the greatest peril it had ever encountered. 'Flanders once in the power of Louis XIV.,' writes Temple, 'the Dutch feel that their country will never be more than a maritime province of France.'

He was not mistaken. If the Netherlands passed under the French dominion, the United Provinces would assuredly be ruined or conquered. Antwerp once become a French town, the closing of the navigation of the Scheldt, on which depended the wealth of the Dutch commerce, could not fail to be again an open question. It was easy to foresee that Louis XIV. would not tie himself down by that clause of the treaty of Münster which had been wrung from the feebleness of Spain, and the republic would henceforth find itself exposed to an irreparable disaster. Moreover, the invasion of the Netherlands by the King of France laid open the United Provinces to the same fate. It was to be feared that, once the Spanish succession open, the King of France, proclaiming himself heir to Charles V. and Philip II., would claim them in turn as former possessions of Spain. Moreover, the pretensions which Louis XIV. was now making to Brabant, of which a part had been ceded by Spain to the republic, were sufficient, however cautious he might be, to alarm the States-General.

Their apprehensions were the more justified that the King of France had refused to enter into any engagement either to enfranchise the Netherlands and constitute them an independent republic or to divide them with the United Provinces. In spite of the skill which the Grand Pensionary had shown during the negotiation of a treaty which had been always evaded, he had obtained no more than the promise of a preliminary agreement. He had persistently confided in it, and would not be discouraged by the little reassuring news which was constantly re-echoed in his correspondence with Paris and Brussels. 'I know,' he wrote to D'Estrades, 'that this State would be very willing to assist the pacific intentions of the king your master, by an agreement between his Majesty and the King of Spain, and for myself individually there is nothing I would not do to second the counsels of those who might support any moderate proposals of his Majesty. He will, no doubt, lean towards all that may best exhibit his justice and generosity, and will reflect that at the present conjuncture of affairs he can no longer defer his overtures to his most attached friends and allies, who are convinced that he will act

in concert with them in this important matter in accordance with the assurances which he has given.'

These illusions had been followed by a cruel disappointment. When Louis XIV. thought that he had no further need of their support, he abruptly put an end to the measures of policy which he had hitherto made use of. Before giving orders for his troops to take the field, he wrote to Count d'Estrades to leave Breda, where the French ambassador had gone to take part in the negotiations for peace between England and the republic. He ordered him to return immediately to the Hague, and to give notice to the States-General of his resolution to unite the Netherlands to his kingdom. To justify this undertaking, D'Estrades was commissioned to distribute amongst them copies of the memorial setting forth the Queen's rights. He was at the same time to reassure them by persuading them that the King of France would content himself, in return for their neutrality, with that part of the Netherlands which did not touch their frontiers.

This communication, which embarrassed D'Estrades, was overwhelming to John de Witt, who was the first to receive it. Although he was beginning to be uneasy, he had not expected such a frustration of his hopes, and when, on Sunday, May 15th, 1667, D'Estrades communicated his despatches to him, the Grand Pensionary, 'although he did not lose control over himself, could not conceal his surprise and dismay.' He reminded him of Louis XIV.'s last promise to undertake nothing without the knowledge of the States-General. He protested against the eagerness with which the King had resolved to precipitate a rupture, instead of applying to the States who would have been quite ready to assist him in procuring satisfaction from Spain. The French ambassador, disarmed by these remonstrances, was forced to explain to De Witt that the King had fulfilled the promise of a preliminary agreement between the two governments, by sending to the United Provinces the first communication of the manifesto which had announced the taking of the field by his troops.

The assembly of the States-General, of whom he demanded

an audience on the next day, May 16, shared the sentiments of the Grand Pensionary. They listened with equal astonishment and irritation to the letter which Louis XIV. addressed to them, and announced to Count d'Estrades, through their president Claes Kann, the deputy of Friesland, that they would deliberate on the answer to be sent. The ambassador of France was to learn, as he recognised later, 'that there was nothing that the members of the States would not undertake rather than that the Netherlands should belong to the king,' 'for they cannot be convinced,' he adds, 'but that if that occurs, their republic would be lost in a couple of years.'

To arrest Louis XIV.'s conquests the States-General had need of allies, but they found themselves alone. Engaged in a war with England which was exhausting their resources, they seemed reduced to be the impotent witnesses of the French invasion, unable to count upon any assistance 'to protect them against the rays of that sun which it is said intends to burn up all before it.'

By his able and farsighted measures, Louis XIV. had insured, if not indifference, at any rate inaction, on the part of Europe. Leopold I., Emperor of Germany, head of the house of Austria, brother-in-law of Charles II. the young King of Spain, and heir-presumptive to the Spanish monarchy, was specially interested in taking in hand the defence of the Netherlands. The victory of St. Gothard, gained by General Montecuculli, had saved him from the threatened invasion of the Turks, and obliged the Sultan Mahomet IV. to accept peace. But he was none the less forced to leave unanswered the urgent appeal of the court of Madrid.

French diplomacy, in fact, under the inspiration of Mazarin, had taken guarantees against the Emperor of Germany, even in the empire, by insuring the co-operation of a certain number of German princes whose estates were situated between Austria and the Netherlands. Louis XIV. had made use of their alliance for his own purposes by making them promise to refuse a passage across their possessions to the imperial troops. To complete his measures of precaution, he was paving the way for an insurrection in

Hungary, thus insuring the Emperor's neutrality by the threat of a dangerous diversion. He even attempted to bias him by offering him a share eventually in the Spanish monarchy. Though nothing came of this proposal at the time, the Emperor's chief advisers, won over by the French king's liberality, had received it favourably. Louis XIV. was not satisfied with depriving Spain of the assistance of the empire. He attempted to strengthen his alliance with the northern powers, Sweden and the Elector of Brandenburg, who were beginning to fear the dangers of the French supremacy.

To reassure them, he had given up the idea of placing the Duke d'Enghien, the son of the great Condé, on the Polish throne, and relied, in the event of the abdication of the king, John Casimir, on the candidature of the Duke of Neubourg. He counted, moreover, on the subsidies of France to force Sweden, if not to help him, at least to stand aloof. On the other hand, by winning over the Elector of Brandenburg's ministers by his bounties, he was successfully negotiating a treaty by which the Elector engaged to take no part in the war with the Netherlands. Lastly, in the south of Europe he took measures to prevent the conclusion of the peace which had been negotiated between Spain and Portugal. Although the treaty of the Pyrenees stipulated that France should cease to give assistance to Portugal, he nevertheless offered to the Court of Lisbon an offensive and defensive alliance which was eagerly accepted. He thus succeeded in keeping Spain in a state of perpetual alarm, which prevented all despatch of assistance to the Netherlands.

The King of England himself had been won over to the French policy. In declaring war against him, so that the United Provinces might not succumb to an unequal struggle, Louis XIV. had been careful to adhere to the appearance only of a rupture, and counted on reaping the reward of the consideration he had shown towards him. He had therefore confidently proposed to him a convention by which the two kings promised 'not to form any connections which would not be for their mutual advantage, for an entire year.' Charles II.

promised this in a letter written to his mother who was in France; and Louis XIV., satisfied with this declaration, transmitted a similar engagement to the Queen-Dowager of England. 'It is seriously to be feared,' writes the Grand Pensionary de Witt to one of his correspondents, 'that France will unite with England, with a view to the conquest of the Netherlands, for anything may be looked for in times when there is nothing but treachery and corruption.' Deprived thus of all help, and obliged at the same time to maintain a war against England, the States-General had but two paths open to them, to ally themselves with Spain, or to temporise with France.

If they allied themselves with Spain, they could not hope for the time being to gain over any of the other Powers, and they placed themselves in open rupture with France. Nevertheless, under the weight of their resentment and apprehensions, they would have attempted some interference in the struggle, at whatever risk, to give the signal of resistance to Europe, had not Spain repulsed them. Believing that the United Provinces had more interest even than herself in her defence, Spain maintained that she ought not to be called upon to make any sacrifice for the welfare of the Netherlands, and already regretted the proposals which the governor of the Netherlands had addressed to the States-General to obtain their co-operation. The former had just negotiated with them, through his first minister, Baron de Bergheyck, a plan for a defensive alliance. According to the terms of this convention, the States promised to assist Spain with a loan of three millions and a reinforcement of twelve thousand men, in return for the occupation of the towns of Ostend and Bruges and of a few fortresses on the frontiers of the Netherlands and the United Provinces, which they were to garrison. But the illusions which it pleased the court of Madrid to entertain, and the growing security which had been given to them by the check of the French expedition on the approach of winter, soon changed their mood. England also claimed, as the price of the assistance demanded of her by the Spanish Government, a cession of territory, so that Spain, forced to share the Netherlands between the King of France and her two allies,

would have been, as the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo ironically observes 'chastised with three rods at once.' According to the latest instructions given to him, he declared himself only authorised to pledge the forts and revenues of Waas, already devastated by the French troops.

The States-General were incensed at so absurd a proposition. As soon as they saw that Spain was trifling with them, they refrained from taking any further steps, and De Witt sent word to the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, Don Estevan de Gamarra, 'that if his masters had no other friends than the States, they might boast themselves of having none at all.'

The indecision of Spain served the policy of the Grand Pensionary, who feared as a desperate measure any sudden rupture with France. His political programme is summed up in the following sentence in a letter which he wrote later, to the ambassadors of the States-General in England, Meerman and Boreel: 'To abandon Spain is to make France a present of the Netherlands; to take her defence upon ourselves alone would be folly. There only remains therefore conciliation.' De Witt was determined not to give way to opposition, and to prevent the French dominion extending over the Netherlands. But on the other hand, he was too prudent not to consider that the republic would compromise herself without avail, if she could not insure the aid of powerful allies. He resolved to gain time by negotiations, at once the wisest and most sagacious decision. By so doing, it remained with the States-General to follow up the projects of agreement with Louis XIV. if the French king moderated his demands, and if the inaction of Europe obliged the republic to compound with him, whilst at the same time they remained at liberty to unite sooner or later with the other powers against him, if his ambition, exceeding all measure, should open the eyes of Europe to the danger of his conquests.

Louis XIV. himself favoured the Grand Pensionary's plan by putting an end to the campaign of the Netherlands before the weather forced him to do so. The taking of Alost by Turenne ended the expedition, which seemed therefore

postponed till the following year. 'Never were French ardour and promptitude less conspicuous than on this occasion,' wrote John de Witt to one of his correspondents. The wish to return to Versailles and enjoy the lustre of his triumph, would certainly not have sufficed to arrest the King of France in his enterprise, had he not thought it better to yield to political advice, and show unexpected consideration towards the States-General.

The first steps towards agreement had not yet been very cordially received by him in spite of the eagerness of the Grand Pensionary. Although the invasion of the Netherlands by the King of France appeared to be an infringement of the preliminary agreement which Louis XIV. had made with the United Provinces, De Witt had to some extent set aside his legitimate resentment, so as to leave open a way for negotiations. He had resumed his correspondence with Count d'Estrades, who, to put an end to disagreeable conferences, had returned to Breda. 'Those who have been assured by word of mouth and by letters,' he writes to him, 'that no active steps would be taken in regard to the rights of the Queen over the Spanish Netherlands, without a previous communication to them, and that nothing will be undertaken except in concert with them, and who, in consideration of this formal promise, have given a like assurance to those of the States most esteemed for their prudence and worth, now find themselves incapable of shaking off their distrust and effacing the disagreeable impression which they have received. In fact, they find themselves as much defrauded by the effect of these assurances as those who depended upon their statements and thought to have secured the required peace and safety. I therefore implore your Excellency to remind his Majesty of all that has passed on this subject, that he may still fulfil the promise, so solemnly made.' To give more weight to his demand he caused Louis XIV. to be informed 'that the States of Holland would willingly induce the States-General to interpose with Spain to obtain reasonable satisfaction for him, provided the King of France would openly state his intentions to them.' He urgently demanded from Louis XIV.

this proof of good faith: 'I implore you to be persuaded, and to impress upon the court, if necessary,' he writes again to D'Estrades, 'that the matter will not brook any further delay, and that I will set to work on all that depends upon me, so that we may come to an understanding in this important affair, unless it is made quite impossible to me by a longer retarding of the overtures for which we are waiting.'

Louis XIV. made no reply to these advances. In spite of the advice given him by Count d'Estrades, warning him that he was exposing himself to the imminent hostility of the United Provinces, he gave notice to his ambassador 'that he would not enter into any imaginary negotiations which would give the Spaniards time for defence, and bring foreign aid to the Netherlands.'

Nevertheless the Grand Pensionary furthered his proposals with such skill and perseverance that he succeeded in resuming the negotiations, whilst by charging Van Beuningen to offer to the King of France, besides Franche-Comté, the towns of Cambrai, Saint Omer, and Aire, he undertook to recall him to the projects of agreement to which the invasion of the Netherlands seemed to have given an irreparable blow. The peace between England and the United Provinces, which the French Government had vainly attempted to retard, and the negotiations for an alliance, which were rather suspended than broken off between the States-General and Spain, induced Louis XIV. to show himself less exacting. He did not consider Van Beuningen's offers sufficient, but he nevertheless showed a disposition to consider them. Renouncing his claims on the Netherlands, he contented himself with demanding the places bordering on the frontiers of France—Douai, Tournay, Bergues, Cambrai, Saint Omer, and Aire, and giving up the town of Lille which he had conquered, in exchange for a strip of territory which enabled France to advance in the Netherlands as far as Charleroi. He demanded as compensation that the Spanish Government should give up not only Franche-Comté but Luxembourg. He exacted, moreover, that the States-General, to make up to him for that portion of the Netherlands which he relinquished, should undertake to coerce

Spain, in the event of her not accepting the terms of the treaty, by giving France armed assistance.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland took care to evince no objection to these proposals, however inadmissible they seemed to him, and received them as a token of reconciliation. He considered the success of his policy as assured if he prevented the Netherlands from becoming French provinces. If only he could be secure of this, he was ready to make any concessions. With this view he only made some reservations, beginning by contesting Louis XIV.'s claims to Tournay, Charleroi, and Luxembourg, which, if abandoned to France, seemed to leave the Netherlands at his mercy.

Dreading, moreover, to find Louis intractable, should further successes encourage him to return to his ambitious projects, he demanded a suspension of hostilities during the time given to the court of Madrid to make known its determination.

The forethought of the Grand Pensionary extended even further. He was not content to limit the pretensions which Louis made to the Netherlands, before the Spanish monarchy fell vacant, but he wished to prevent his putting them forward when the death of the young and feeble King of Spain should allow the King of France to claim the inheritance of all his dominions. He also wished to secure to the United Provinces an engagement by which Louis XIV. should definitely renounce all portions of the Netherlands which were not now given up to him. To obtain such a declaration as would give the Republic a perfect security in the future, he offered to guarantee to him by a secret treaty the aid of the States, in the event of the succession to the Spanish monarchy being again reopened. He hoped, by means of this offer of eventual co-operation, not only to avert the imminent danger of the vicinity of France, but to prevent its ever recurring.

Louis, tempted by the hope of an understanding which would one day help him to the inheritance he coveted, and fearing, moreover, that too prolonged a silence would induce the States to enter into irrevocable engagements with his enemies, ended, after much hesitation, by desiring Count d'Estrades to

inform the Grand Pensionary of Holland that he had resolved to come to an agreement with him. He avoided all mention of giving up the Netherlands in the event of a re-opening of the Spanish succession, 'not wishing,' he writes to D'Estrades, 'to dig trenches which he would have eventually to cross.' But although thus reserving his liberty of action for the future, the King declared himself none the less ready to make concessions. He gave up all claim to Tournay and Charleroi, and only demanded Luxembourg in the event of the Spaniards preferring to keep Franche-Comté. To make his wish for conciliation more evident, he offered to content himself with the possession of the conquered places, and, wishing to leave no doubt of his pacific intentions, he consented to prolong to six months the three months' suspension of hostilities demanded of him.

This last proposal, however conciliatory in appearance, left the United Provinces, by the alternative offered, exposed to two dangers: the fear, still distant, of Louis XIV.'s claims upon the Netherlands, in the event of the opening up of the Spanish succession, and the immediate necessity of a rupture with Spain, if the negotiations did not tend to peace. This necessity was the more imminent that the King of France insisted upon the court of Madrid recognising the independence of Portugal. It would suffice therefore for Spain to refuse to come to an understanding with Portugal, for the United Provinces to be formally required to aid the King of France to possess himself of the Netherlands. The States-General would not consent to so compromising an engagement. They considered a rupture with Spain equally prejudicial to their political and their commercial interests. After the glorious termination of the war with England through the peace of Breda they found themselves more at liberty to resist the French claims. Doubting the sincerity of Louis XIV. they were ready to receive the offers of confederacy, skilfully renewed by the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo. 'Whatever the wisest among the government may wish in such a case,' wrote D'Estrades, 'they must follow in the ruck.' Those most opposed to France gave expression to this hostile feeling, even

claiming a fresh undertaking from Louis XIV., by the terms of which the French King, contenting himself with the fortresses he had conquered or proposed to acquire, should recognise as valid the renunciation he had made of the succession to the Spanish monarchy which had been the condition of his marriage with the Infanta Maria Theresa. Van Beuningen, the ambassador to the States-General at Paris, who had obtained leave of absence to return to the Hague, warmly encouraged this offensive policy, at the risk of compromising the last chances of agreement.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland was too prudent to risk making such a humiliating proposal to the King of France, knowing well from the haughty language held at Paris and the Hague by Lionne and D'Estrades that Louis would never consent to it. 'M. de Witt, whose greatness of mind and capacity are far above the ordinary,' wrote Lionne, 'saw at once that that string must not be touched by either party.' He further interposed with Van Beuningen to induce him to relinquish exactions which only served to irritate the King of France. By remaining faithful to the policy of conciliation which he had always followed, De Witt hoped to succeed in diverting Louis XIV. from his designs on the Netherlands. 'The Grand Pensionary,' writes D'Estrades, 'implores your Majesty to consider that such great affairs, involving so many interests, cannot be treated of without taking precautions which are not in use in kingdoms where the Sovereign's will decides everything.' According to his representations to the French ambassador, it was only at the cost of fresh concessions from Louis that he could prevent the States from demanding from him the renunciation of the Spanish succession, and assure him of their co-operation should it be opened. He also required that Louis should limit his claims to keeping his conquests, and content himself if he again went to war with forcing Spain to leave them to him, but should abstain from extending them. To prevent, moreover, the King of France from yielding to any temptation to break the peace when once made, he insisted that the clauses of the treaty which he proposed should be guaranteed by the States-General, and by such princes as

should offer their mediation. Such a project was a check to the hopes of Louis XIV. 'It took the game out of his hands,' wrote Lionne, 'by preventing him from profiting by the renewal of the war if Spain should decline peace.'

Nevertheless, in spite of the angry remonstrances which his ambassador was charged to address to the States, Louis recognised the necessity of showing at least some appearance of moderation. Fearing to make his intentions of renewing war too evident if he objected to a treaty of peace being guaranteed by other States, he declared himself ready to accept this latter condition. To insure the States-General, moreover, against any necessity of breaking with Spain, which they wished to avoid having forced upon them, he forbore to insist upon it, in the event of war being renewed in consequence of Spain refusing to grant peace to Portugal. He only demanded such a rupture in the event of Spain not consenting to relinquish to him that portion of the Netherlands which he had conquered. He went so far even as to make known to Count d'Estrades that 'to accommodate himself to the ideas of those with whom he had to deal, instead of pushing matters to a climax, he would be content to obtain from the States a promise of refusing a passage to any troops who might come from the German side to the aid of the Spanish possessions.' His only reservation was with regard to the demand made upon him to renounce the prosecution of his conquests in the Netherlands in the event of Spain refusing the terms of peace, and to forego his claims on that country should the death of Charles II. enable him later to make good his title to the Spanish monarchy. 'His Majesty,' he says himself, in the memorandum which he sent to D'Estrades, 'could not be supposed to be capable of such a mistake, as it would be to tie his hands for ever.'

It was upon this last condition that De Witt met with an unconquerable resistance from Louis. Hitherto, during the five months of negotiations which had just expired, he had managed so skilfully as to induce him gradually to abandon those claims which gave most offence to the States-General; and he still did not despair of gaining his cause, even if it were

at the price of fresh concessions. Renouncing for the time, in spite of Van Beuningen's remonstrances, any attempt at obtaining an engagement from Louis not to claim the Netherlands in the event of the Spanish monarchy falling vacant, he contented himself with endeavouring to shield them from his grasp, by obliging the court of Madrid to accept the proposals of the King of France, so as to force upon the belligerents the conclusion of peace.

The States of Holland, conforming their policy to his advice, resolved to inform the Spanish ambassador 'that they thought the offers of the King of France too reasonable to be repulsed with impunity, and that, in case of need, they would ask the States-General to have recourse to the most forcible measures to impose them upon the Spanish Government.' While this resolution was being referred to the Federal Assembly, De Witt undertook to represent to Gamarra that 'his masters could not allow a fire to be lit so near them, without trying to extinguish it.' On the other hand, the Grand Pensionary attempted to influence Louis by the offer of assistance, if needed, against all interference, should he consent in the event of a rupture with Spain to change the seat of war, and to follow up his conquests in Franche-Comté, Catalonia, Spain, and Italy, contenting himself with keeping those he had made in the Netherlands without extending them further. 'It is necessary,' he said to D'Estrades, 'whilst seeking security for the King, to look after that of the States, who could only feel themselves safe from His Majesty's great power, in the assurance that he would never be master of Flanders.'

Louis refused to enter into this engagement. He already regretted the concessions that he had made. He had proposed them in the hope that they would not satisfy Spain, and did not wish, if his prevision were justified, to defer the union of the Netherlands to his kingdom, being determined, if peace was refused to him, to profit by the renewal of the war to extend the frontiers of France. He therefore informed D'Estrades 'that in the event of the States being obstinately bent upon his carrying on his conquests elsewhere than in

Flanders, all negotiations must cease, and other measures be taken.' 'You saw by my last,' writes D'Estrades to Lionne, 'that I have deprived the States of all hopes of our withdrawing our troops from the Netherlands.'

The policy of the Grand Pensionary was thus held in check. He had flattered himself that he could guard the Netherlands against the French domination by obtaining a last concession from Louis XIV., and this guarantee had been definitely refused to him. Prevented thus from attaining the end he had never ceased to pursue, he was tempted to overstep it, by the alluring but dangerous idea of forcing the submission of that powerful monarch, whose conquests he wished to arrest. 'The welfare of the Republic,' he writes, 'lies in the alliances needful to her being confirmed as soon as possible.' It was in diplomatic negotiations with other States that he henceforth sought the success of his policy of resistance, and he found in the intervention of Sweden and England the support he needed against France.

Attempts at an understanding with the court of Stockholm had long been in operation, and the advances made had had a most favourable reception. They were the more opportune that the invasion of the Netherlands had weakened the ties which had hitherto united that court to France. Sweden certainly did not refuse the subsidies of Louis XIV., but would not become his vassal, and was provoked at the arrogance with which she was treated by Lionne, who had not hesitated to say that 'if the Swedes intended to give any trouble, means would soon be found to drive them back to their dens.'

The Grand Chancellor, Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie, had been hitherto the most potent ally of the French policy. He was of French origin through his grandfather, Queen Christina's favourite, and an all-powerful minister under Charles Gustavus, whose sister he had married. The minority of the new King, Charles XI., and the Regency of his mother, Hedwig Eleanor, Duchess of Holstein, made La Gardie master of the government. He had the entire direction of foreign affairs, and shared that of home affairs, with the four great officers of State—the Justiciary, the Lord Treasurer, the Grand

Constable, and the High Admiral. But he had to reckon with the Senate composed of twenty-five members, which had become a species of Grand Council. This assembly replaced the Diet, where the entire nation was represented by the four orders of the clergy, the nobility, the burghers, and the peasants, and whose vote was only required for extraordinary levies of money or troops. The Diet being only assembled at rare intervals, the Senate considered itself as the guardian of its authority. Kept at a distance by the late King, it had taken advantage of the minority to resume all its powers, and was gradually severing itself from the Grand Chancellor, whose influence was on the wane. Senator Biœrnklow, who owed his fortune to La Gardie, was now endeavouring to supplant him. He collected numerous partisans around him, who declared equal hostility against the Prime Minister himself, and his policy of union with France.

This situation was favourable to the negotiations which the States-General had again entered into with Sweden. To prevent that country from pledging itself to England, they had eagerly received the Swedish ambassador to London, Count Dohna, who had been sent to the Hague to settle the differences which had arisen as to trade between the two countries. The conference ended in a speedy agreement which satisfied the claims of Sweden. The concessions made by the States were the preliminary to a political alliance. It was prepared under the auspices of the two Senators, Biœrnklow and Sten Bielk, who had resolutely headed the opposition to France, and never ceased to point out the dangers into which Louis XIV. was thrusting all Europe. The French ambassador, the Marquis de Pomponne, vainly endeavoured to baffle their measures by his proposals. In return for the subsidies which he offered he only asked Sweden to consent to co-operate in the defence of the Treaty of Westphalia, by holding her troops in readiness, without necessarily making use of them. This agreement had been held in suspense by the absence of the Grand Chancellor, who had been detained for two months at his country house by a dangerous illness, thus leaving the sole direction of the government in his enemies' hands.

His return was favourable to the French ambassador's proposals, which were laid before the Senate, where they seemed likely to be approved of. During a renewed absence which he was imprudent enough to prolong, they were, without his knowledge, altered, and almost reversed.

He bitterly complained of this, accusing Biœrnklow of being in the pay of England. The most violent altercations ensued, and the Grand Chancellor, threatened with a suit by the Senate for slander, was nearly sending in his resignation. His departure for his estates on the occasion of the Christmas festivities left his enemies definitely masters of the field.

They renewed their design of associating Sweden in the defence of the Netherlands, and on their own sole responsibility, in the absence of the greater part of the court in the country, they gave directions to Count Dohna, who had remained at the Hague, to enter into any alliance which England and Holland were willing to make in favour of Spain.

The hopes of John de Witt were justified; he was right when he wrote to Count d'Estrades: 'The King of France will soon discover that he cannot very easily conquer the Netherlands, as a league of several States will be opposed to him.'

Nevertheless the United Provinces could not count on the co-operation of Sweden as long as they were not assured of an alliance with England. The reconciliation of the two countries had been first urged by Van Beuningen, when he was ambassador at Paris, and he had never ceased to press for a prompt conclusion of peace, so as to arrest the French King's conquests in the Netherlands. De Witt had also long recognised the interest of the United Provinces in this reconciliation. As soon as he heard from Van Beuningen that Louis XIV.'s entry into the Netherlands was imminent, he wrote to him: 'I cannot believe that England will quietly see France take possession of the Netherlands even if King Charles II. have entered into the most solemn engagement to that effect, persuaded as I am that the feeling of the entire English nation would force him to break it.' He said the same to Beverningh, and begged him to further, without delay, the success of the

negotiations confided to him at the congress of Breda. He assured him that, 'in spite of all appearance to the contrary, the English would in the end come to an agreement with the States, uniting with them in principles, which France would scarcely find agreeable to her.' 'The sympathy between the English and the French nations,' he adds, 'is not so great, nor the King of France's present designs so pleasant in English eyes, that either of the two can count on the continued friendship of the other.'

To draw nearer to England, it was necessary to begin by concluding peace. As soon as it was signed, De Witt hastened to profit by it. With this view, he urged forward the despatch of the ambassador, who was to represent the States-General at the court of Charles II., and obtained the appointment of one of the most devoted friends of his policy, John Meerman, burgomaster of Leyden. The new envoy of the States was full of ardour, and so confident in himself that one of the correspondents of the court of France said that 'he thought himself capable of filling the office of Governor and Captain-General of the Republic.' Accompanied by John Boreel, burgomaster of Middleburg, he started for London, announcing 'that he should endeavour to secure a close alliance with England, and that something would soon be heard of it.'

Whilst the Grand Pensionary took pains to reassure Count d'Estrades, by persuading him that Meerman would arrange everything in concert with Louis XIV.'s ambassador in London, the most urgent attempts were being made to persuade Charles II. to join the States against France, in the interests of a common defence. Meerman was directed to represent to him that he would force the States-General to treat with France if he did not come to the succour of the Netherlands, whilst by taking part with them he would find in Sweden and the German princes, allies, who were only waiting for a sign to declare themselves.

Charles II. was not to be so easily persuaded. He made it known through his ministers that the wound left by the late war was by no means healed, and that he must have time to recognise his new friends. Meerman replied: 'You will

take so long to find us out, that the time will have passed when your alliance could be useful to us, and the remedy will come too late.' The King admitted the advantages of the alliance, but said that his people mistrusted the Dutch. Besides, he said, the interest of the States-General being most at stake, England should wait until they had made the first move. 'When the King of France has made himself master of the Netherlands, there will still be a great fortress—the sea—which will separate him from England.' 'It is the States,' he added, 'who must take the first steps.' The French King's advances also contributed to prevent the King of England from entering into an agreement with the States. A few weeks after the treaty of Breda, Louis XIV. had sent to Charles II. an able diplomatist, the Marquis de Ruvigny, a member of the Reformed Church of France, and brother-in-law to one of the King's ministers, the Earl of Southampton, and who held relations both in court and in parliament favourable to the success of his embassy. He charged him with proposals for an offensive alliance. The Marquis de Ruvigny was to offer to Charles II. in return for the despatch of a corps of English troops to the Netherlands, assistance in vessels and money, which would enable England to wrest from Spain all or a part of her possessions in the West Indies. At the same time, according to the terms of his instructions, he was to insinuate to him, as a very strong reason for accepting this proposal rather than any other, that nothing could be better than to force the States-General to a desperate measure which would draw them into an immediate alliance with Spain, upon which the King of France would consider himself absolved from all obligations to assist them, in the event of Charles II. desiring to be revenged on them by the declaration of another war.

This treacherous advice could not be without its effect on Charles. Instead of entering into an agreement with France he proposed to compromise the States, by encouraging them in negotiations which could only rouse against them the irreconcilable enmity of Louis. This abrupt change of policy seemed suspicious to the ambassador of the Republic. 'I

fear,' writes Meerman from London, 'that the eagerness now shown to receive my proposals does but hide the intention of injuring the States with France.' The conferences held between the English commissioners, and the envoys from the United Provinces justified these apprehensions.

The English commissioners, after having long evaded the urgent demands for a mutual agreement which Meerman addressed to the court of London, now determined to obtain from the ministers of the Republic a declaration that the States-General would join their allies to oblige France, not only to renounce any further conquests, but to give up those she had already made, and to abide by the limits of the Treaty of the Pyrenees. 'It would be easier,' they said, 'to compel the French, by arms even, to make restitution, than to obtain anything from them by intercession or mediation.' Surprised at this language, and wishing to know what import they could attach to the new dispositions of the court of London, the ministers of the Republic asked the English commissioners 'if they might at once write to the States that the King of England was ready to exact a restitution of all his conquests from the King of France.' But the English commissioners, carefully avoiding the expression of any opinion, replied that they were only charged to find out what were the sentiments of the States, so as to make known to the King of England whether the former were disposed to combine with him in a war with France, adding that they could for the present give no answer. It was in vain that Meerman and Boreel reproached them with this conduct. 'From the very beginning,' they said, 'we have been open and candid, we only ask in return that the King should declare himself. It is useless to discuss means of execution before agreeing upon a plan of action.'

Charles, however, remained impenetrable. He maintained that the offers of the commissioners should have sufficed to inspire the United Provinces with perfect confidence, and refused to come to any explanation until the States had sent him their demands in writing. The duplicity of this conduct is sufficiently proved by a despatch written some days previously by the Marquis de Ruvigny, in which the

French ambassador communicated to Louis XIV. the draft of a treaty proposed by Charles II. for an offensive league against the States-General.

De Witt had been on his guard against this deceitful policy, and constantly impressed the greatest caution upon the ambassadors of the States. But he was none the less troubled with ever-increasing perplexities. 'I cannot make up my mind,' he writes to the Grand Pensionary of Zealand, 'as to what is best to do, or not to do, which I do not think has ever before happened to me during my whole period of office.' Resolved to check the advance of the King of France, he feared, in accordance with Meerman's anxious misgivings, 'to let slip any opportunity of rallying England to the interests of the States, and on the other hand he would not run the risk of driving Louis to extremities by pledging himself to England, before he was certain of the sincerity of the proposals of Charles's commissioners.

The impulse of the English nation to resist France and to ally itself with the United Provinces suddenly relieved him from his difficulties, and—according to the expression of a contemporary—'brought him light out of darkness.' Annoyed by the sale of Dunkirk, and irritated by the disasters of the last war with the United Provinces, public opinion in London showed itself as hostile as at the Hague to the conquest of the Netherlands.

'The jealousy is tremendous,' writes the French ambassador, on his arrival in England, 'and minds are so imbued with the old idea that the more feeble of the two powers must always be supported, by maintaining the balance between France and Spain, that it is to be feared that there is a general disposition to assist the Spaniards.'

'Common sense and the public welfare,' he writes again 'will not, they tell me, permit of their witnessing unmoved the conquest of the Netherlands, since it is easy to see that England would no longer be able to resist France, when the latter should have conquered all those provinces.' These sentiments were re-echoed by the parliament, which had been sitting again for two months, and which the

Emperor of Germany's envoy, Baron Lisola, was stirring up by his intrigues in the cause of Spain. The downfall of the Chancellor and Prime Minister, Clarendon, seemed to give the signal for a new policy. Tired of his domineering, and finding in him a troublesome censor of his amusements, Charles was ready to sacrifice the faithful servant who had been his companion and counsellor in his evil fortunes, and had deprived him of the seals. The House of Commons, led by the Duke of Buckingham, and in which all the Chancellor's enemies were leagued against him, had precipitated his ruin. It violently attacked his administration, and drew up a bill of attainder against him in seventeen clauses. It accused his foreign policy, which it considered too favourable to France, as well as his home policy, which gave satisfaction neither to the popular party nor to that of the court. In spite of the protection of the Lords, who found no charge sufficiently established against him, Clarendon, threatened with being brought before a commission, from which he could only expect condemnation, and yielding to the urgent advice of the Duke of York, his son-in-law, who found himself incapable of defending him, took the course of leaving the kingdom to which he had eight years previously brought back the son of Charles I.

By his retirement to France he anticipated the decree of banishment which was pronounced against him, and which left him to die in exile.

Henry Bennet, created Earl of Arlington, to whom the direction of foreign affairs passed on the fall of Clarendon, could only win the confidence of parliament by outwardly following a more popular foreign policy. Being married to a Dutchwoman, a daughter of Beverwaert, formerly ambassador in London, he was favourable to an alliance between England and the States-General, although he still hesitated to 'bell the cat.' Parliament imperiously demanded this alliance, and complained of the prolonged indecision of the King. 'Some of its members,' wrote the ambassador of the Republic, 'went so far as to say, that his wish to flatter France would make him as much hated as the

Chancellor Clarendon.' Charles II., not daring to resist this feeling, made up his mind to yield, though much against his will. He began to withdraw himself gradually from Louis XIV., and to show himself more exacting. Not satisfied with refusing him his co-operation, he made it a condition of the neutrality of England that Ostend and Nieupoort should be ceded, and that war should be declared by France against the United Provinces. Louis refusing to consent, if England remained neutral, to cede to her any part of his conquests from Spain, and not choosing 'out of respect for the honour of the treaties,' he proudly writes, 'to declare himself the enemy of the States, before they gave him any cause for a rupture,' Charles seized the pretext to yield to the popular impulse. He resolved to propose to the States to join with England against France, and the better to ensure the success of this negotiation he confided it to Sir William Temple.

No one was more capable of bringing it to a successful issue. Born in London in 1628, and brought up at Cambridge, Temple, having completed his education by travel, established himself in Ireland, in the midst of his family. He lived in retirement until the Restoration, enjoying at his ease the domestic happiness which he owed to his marriage with Dorothy Osborne, a daughter of the former governor of Guernsey under Charles I. He profited by his leisure for the study of history and philosophy, and thus acquired those qualities as a writer, which have given so bright a lustre to his name. He was as much esteemed for his character as for his talents. Frank and open, opposed to all ostentation, impervious to corruption, he had that sense of honour to which the court of Charles II. professed a shameful indifference. The Restoration opened to him the path of public life. As a member of the Dublin parliament he became acquainted with the Duke of Ormond, one of the most upright of the new king's ministers, who had just been made lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The recommendation of the Duke of Ormond insured him the confidence of the Lord Chancellor, Clarendon, and diplomacy seemed to offer the most favourable field for his abilities.

He was sent to the Bishop of Munster to gain his adhesion to the English alliance in the war with England against the United Provinces. The skill and experience of which he gave proof united to his natural gift for observation, soon pointed him out for a more important post. He was appointed resident at Brussels, and Louis XIV.'s invasion of the Netherlands procured him the principal part in the negotiations. He became from the first a defender of that policy to which he always remained faithful—that of resistance to France, whose domination he considered as a threat of subjection to all Europe.

He began by reviving the failing courage of the governor of the Netherlands—the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo—who, on hearing of the taking of Charleroi, was disposed to quit Brussels and retire upon the citadel of Antwerp. Being asked to take the initiative, Temple told him that he would not be the first to leave, having orders to remain at his post, and he thus kept him in the capital, to prevent its surrender to the conquerors. Bent upon the arrest of the French invasion, Temple constantly represented to his government how dangerous a conquest of the maritime province by France would be for England, and he energetically demonstrated the necessity of a prompt understanding with the States-General. 'It would be,' he writes to Arlington at the commencement of Louis XIV.'s campaign in May 1667, 'the best revenge that could be drawn from the game which France is playing in engaging us in the last war against the United Provinces.' Five months later he laments that the projects for an alliance are still in abeyance. 'I leave to those who are in the ministry,' he says, 'as well in England as in France, the care of taking the wisest and most necessary measures to bring about a reconcilation before it is too late.'

His wishes were necessarily encouraged by his relations with the Grand Pensionary. John de Witt's renown had made Temple impatient to be acquainted with him, and he went to pay him a visit during a journey which he made to Holland, without any official mission, with his sister, Lady Giffard. 'The sole object of my stay here,' he writes in introducing

himself to him, 'is to see the things most considerable in your country, and I should lose my credit if I left it without seeing you.' De Witt, who was already interested in Temple's favour by the reports addressed to him by the ambassadors of the Republic, was sensible of the compliment, and replied with a cordial sincerity which gained him the confidence of the English diplomatist. The two statesmen soon came to an understanding as to the causes which had placed England and the Republic at variance, and which De Witt attributed to the 'mischief-making of Downing.' They congratulated themselves on the re-establishment of peace between the two nations, and the Grand Pensionary of Holland, whilst 'keeping himself sufficiently at arm's-length,' gave Temple to understand how much he wished that he could trust England after what had occurred in Flanders. Temple retired delighted with this conversation, declaring 'that anyone negotiating with M. de Witt should follow a straightforward path, without refinements or false colouring, or the offering of a shadow for the substance.' The esteem and sympathy which he felt for the simplicity of his life, and the frankness of his character, with which he was the more charmed that he was accustomed to the greedy luxury of Charles II.'s ministers and the dissimulation of the Spanish ambassadors, guaranteed beforehand the success of their diplomatic relations, so that when a policy favourable to an understanding with the States-General prevailed in the councils of Charles II., he found himself appointed to negotiate the conclusion of the treaty between the two governments.

Towards the end of December, Temple received orders to leave Brussels and go to London, taking the Hague on his way. It was only another plot to which the King of England had recourse as a last attempt to detach the States from France without being forced to enter into any agreement with them. He thought that John de Witt's confidence in Temple's sincerity would enable him to trifle with the Grand Pensionary with impunity. Temple, who was equally deceived, entered eagerly into the mission with which he was charged, and which satisfied all his wishes. Arrived at the Hague, he

pressed De Witt, in accordance with his instructions, to tell him whether the States would consent to an offensive and defensive league against Louis XIV. De Witt was not imposed upon by these advances, but remained on his guard, and stood faithfully to his programme, seeking no other guarantee than such as would preserve the Netherlands from conquest, and resolved, if he could obtain that, to abide by the French alliance. At the first interview he hastened to thank Temple for the communications with which the King of England had charged his envoy, but he did not conceal that, instead of being questioned, he expected to receive an answer. Pressed to say what course the United Provinces would take, the Grand Pensionary held to the resolution made by the States of Holland the preceding month, according to the terms of which they only intended to offer their mediation, and, if necessary, to enforce it. He merely added that to make it successful the negotiators of the Republic must also be made aware whether the real co-operation of England would be insured to them. Temple replied that he was not authorised to pledge his government, and that his only mission was to ask for the promise of the States. He urged him to be explicit as to the offer of an offensive league, giving him to fear that, should the Republic refuse, England would enter into an agreement with France for a share in the Netherlands, and even for the dismemberment of the United Provinces. De Witt, without affecting a confidence in the Kings of France and England which he no longer possessed, still refused to give way to his suspicions, and renewed his declarations that the States would only join in a mediation on the condition of the proposition coming from England. He thus avoided, not only a rupture with Louis XIV., but any compromising of the understanding between the Republic and France, and determined to maintain his reserve as long as England did not declare herself, thus scrupulously conforming his conduct to all the rules of political prudence.

Forced to recognise that the States would enter into no agreement, until the co-operation of England was guaranteed to them, Temple suddenly made other overtures to De Witt

for the purpose of satisfying himself that there was no secret project of treaty between France and the United Provinces. He asked whether the States would be opposed to the King of England's intervention in favour of Spain to recover from Louis XIV. that portion of the Netherlands which the King of France had conquered. Having received this proposal in silence, De Witt, in a further meeting, showed himself rather favourable than otherwise. But Temple had to be satisfied with this liberty of action left to the King of England, and to renounce any hope of the assistance of the States, in the event of Charles, instead of contenting himself with a mediation between France and Spain, declaring war against France.

The account of this mission, faithfully reported by Temple to Charles II. who had sent for him, put an end to the king's indecision. No longer able to evade the satisfaction demanded of him by public opinion, he declared his resolution to ally himself with the States-General, and to accept their proposals. On the next day but one, Temple re-embarked, and after a stormy passage, found himself again at the Hague, happy to be the bearer of full powers to conclude the alliance between England and the Republic.

The very day of his arrival, he went straight to the Grand Pensionary and begged that they might resume their conferences without any useless formalities. The two negotiators easily came to an understanding on the meaning and terms of their last interviews. Temple assured De Witt that the King of England had resolved to make proposals in conformity therewith and promised to co-operate with the States in a mediation between France and Spain. He added that Charles made only one condition, that of a defensive alliance between England and the States, to which it seemed to him the Grand Pensionary could not object. De Witt showed himself both satisfied and surprised. He feared that this unexpected readiness on the part of the King of England might hide some snare. He could not but assent to the offer of mediation in which he had himself taken the initiative, but he hesitated about entering into a defensive alliance. 'He asked himself,' he said, in allusion to the recent war between England and the Republic, 'whether

the late wounds from which the two countries had suffered so severely, were sufficiently cured to allow of their being completely closed.' He would not, moreover, too openly show his distrust of France, not yet having perfect confidence in the intentions, hitherto so vacillating, of the English Government, whom he reproached with never having for two successive years followed the same policy with regard to the United Provinces.

Temple undertook to reassure him. He represented to him that once the States were associated with England in a project of mediation, they were interested in securing the benefits of a defensive alliance. In fact, if they were determined to arrest the conquests of France in the Netherlands, they must expect to bring resentment upon themselves which they were bound to guard against. Further to persuade De Witt, Temple represented to him that according to the assurances of the ambassador of the United Provinces in London, the example of England could not fail to be followed by Sweden and the other States. He renewed his protestations as to the King of England's sincerity, guaranteeing equally that of his ministers, and only withdrew when he had disposed of the last of the Grand Pensionary's scruples.

In a second conference, Temple approached a no less delicate question. The conclusion of the treaty depended upon the rapidity and secrecy with which the negotiations were carried on, but the States-General could enter upon no fresh agreement without the preliminary consent of the provincial states, who required no less than a month or six weeks for deliberation. This long delay would inevitably leave the French ambassador at leisure to foil a project so contrary to the interests of the King his master. To avoid this danger, Temple proposed that the States-General should themselves undertake to conclude the treaty, contenting themselves with sending it for approval to the provincial states. He added that otherwise there would be an end of the negotiations.

De Witt at first thought this expedient impracticable, and represented that the constitution of the Republic offered an

obstacle which could not be overcome. He declared himself obliged to respect the rights of the provincial states, without whose approbation the States-General could make no valid treaty, and pointed out the danger to which the States-General would expose themselves if they exceeded their powers. Temple was not discouraged. He renewed his entreaties that the treaty might be preliminarily accepted and conferences held, in which he would take part with any commissioners appointed by the States who would afterwards be invited to sign it. He assured the Grand Pensionary that all might be arranged in four or five days, and urged him to consider the misfortunes to which the Republic would be exposed if, from too great respect for formalities, the States-General would not undertake to dispense with the preliminary vote of the provincial states. He warmly represented to him that the deputies of the provinces in the Federal Assembly, far from having to fear a disavowal of their proceedings, would, on the contrary, be rewarded by the popular gratitude.

The Grand Pensionary took the advice of those members in whose fidelity he could trust, and finding it more favourable than he had anticipated, hastened to inform Temple. Encouraged by this communication, Temple asked the very next day for an audience of the States-General. He told them he was charged by the King his master to make proposals advantageous to both countries, and asked them to appoint commissioners with whom he could treat. This proposal being accepted, the States granted full powers to a commission of seven members, who represented each of the seven provinces: MM. de Gelicum, d'Asperen, Crommon, Amerongen, Unkel, Coeverden, and Ysbrandt. The Grand Pensionary was associated with them on account of his rights of office, and thus held the direction of the negotiations. On the following day, Temple, who had entered into an arrangement with De Witt, opened the conference with the commissioners, and submitted to them the project of an offensive and defensive alliance, as a condition of mediation. De Witt, always having in mind the caution he wished to observe towards France, once again tried to evade this proposal, and keep to

the mediation. Temple, forced to remain faithful to his instructions, was inflexible.

The commissioners showed great indecision. After having three times retired to consult, they finally gave their consent to the proposal of Charles's envoy, charging De Witt and Ysbrandt to arrange with him as to all the conditions of the alliance. They only exacted that the King should confirm, under the head of maritime treaty, the articles inserted as provisional in the Treaty of Breda which concerned the interests of navigation and commerce, so that they might not be exposed to a renewal of those disputes which had brought about the last war between England and the Republic. At the next day's conference, Temple pointed out to De Witt and Ysbrandt the danger of leaving the negotiation in suspense, and urged them to proceed without waiting for Charles II.'s reply to the commissioners' last demand. He represented the importance of baffling the manœuvres which were being attempted to induce Charles to give preference to an alliance with France over that with the United Provinces. But De Witt nevertheless declared that the States could not give up the guarantee of the maritime treaty. Impatient to overcome this difficulty, Temple proposed an expedient which was agreed to. He showed the two commissioners the letter which he was writing to the King of England, pressing him to satisfy their demand, which was soon granted, and urged that the work of the commission should be finally concluded, undertaking to complete the treaty in conformance with the demands of the States as soon as he should receive Charles's reply, of which he declared himself certain. De Witt consulted Ysbrandt by a glance, and holding out his hand to the English negotiator, told him that he had sufficient confidence in him to ask no other pledge than his word. Temple, on his side, consented to the stipulation that Spain should be constrained to make peace in the event of her refusing to entertain Louis' last proposals, De Witt thus insuring an absence of any aggressive appearance in regard to France, and hoping thenceforth to win all while risking nothing.

Satisfied with his work, he showed no less eagerness than

Temple to press on the conclusion of the negotiations. In a new conference held during the night, from 11 to 1 o'clock in the morning, in presence of all the commissioners, the draft of the treaty, translated from French into Latin, was adopted entire. The most sincere congratulations were exchanged on both sides, and the Grand Pensionary spoke for all when he said to Temple, 'À Bréda comme amis, ici comme frères.' The following Monday, after a final interview, which lasted four hours, the articles were again read, and the formalities of registering, signing, and sealing duly accomplished. The same day the States-General approved, without debate, of the proceedings of their negotiators.

Within a month the States of the provinces, whose vote had been reserved, sent in their ratification of the resolution adopted by the Federal Assembly, and submissively followed the example which the States of Holland had hastened to give them. Public opinion had become an irresistible influence carrying away with it all obstacles.

The negotiations carried on by Temple with the envoy-extraordinary of Sweden at the Hague had not been without their influence in bringing about so speedy a solution. Christopher Delfique, Count Dohna, was worthy from his character to be associated with men like Temple and De Witt. His family feelings as well as his political opinions, made him favourable to an alliance between England and the United Provinces. A nephew of the Princess-Dowager and born in Holland, he had sought his fortunes in Sweden, and had obtained there the rank of major-general. The fact of his belonging to the Calvinist religion, of which he was a faithful disciple, had prevented his entering the Swedish senate, into which Lutherans only were admitted, and he had sought in diplomacy a field for his talents. 'In a big, heavy body,' writes a contemporary, 'he possessed great gifts of mind and intellect, and the knowledge which he had acquired of the use of arms had not prevented his training himself in politics.' He did not conceal his antagonism to Louis XIV., who had forcibly dispossessed his brother from the government of the principality of Orange, wishing to unite it to France, and he

impatiently awaited an opportunity of gratifying his family resentment. Having, moreover, taken an active part in the conferences of Breda, in which Sweden had played the part of mediator between England and the United Provinces, he was eager to complete this work of pacification by a still closer understanding between the two now reconciled countries.

The Grand Pensionary, who had no hope of abruptly breaking off the ties of the old alliance between Sweden and France, had hitherto shown some reserve towards Count Dohna. The latter, on his side, as a near relation of the young Prince of Orange, had avoided any close intimacy with the head of the Republican party. Immediately on his arrival at the Hague, Temple undertook to associate him in the negotiations which he had just concluded with the States-General. At one of the first conferences which he had with De Witt he proposed to go and see Count Dohna, setting aside all ceremony, 'wishing,' he says, 'to ascertain whether the Swedish minister had any powers to engage the Crown in any common measures for the safety of Christendom, being persuaded that if by such a conjunction we could extend it to a triple alliance among us, he would find it too strong a bar for France to venture on.' With this idea, Temple went to Count Dohna, dispensing with all diplomatic preliminaries to his visit. He entered without being announced, and excused his proceeding by saying that his master's interests required that they should put themselves in direct communication with each other. Touched by this frankness the Swedish minister embraced him, and promised to treat him with the same cordiality. Temple, satisfied with this assurance, gave him an account of his negotiations, and added that the alliance of Sweden with England and the United Provinces would guarantee their success. He also pointed out to him the importance of the position which Sweden would regain in Europe by this intervention.

Count Dohna, flattered by these advances, lent a favourable ear to this communication. He acknowledged that his instructions allowed of his taking part for his government 'in all matters concerning Christendom,' but he added that he

could not, without special authority, enter into the agreement which was proposed to him. Nevertheless, knowing the feelings of the Senate in Stockholm, he promised that, in the event of an alliance between England and the Republic, he would do all he could to associate his government with it.

To show the importance which they attached to the co-operation of their new ally, the States-General in conformity with the resolution of the States of Holland agreed that the treaty should reserve the right of the King of Sweden as a principal contracting party in the engagements entered into between Charles II. and the States. Count Dohna hastened to profit by this declaration. Having obtained a promise of subsidies in the event of Sweden intervening for the defence of the Spanish Netherlands, he conditionally ratified the treaty, subject to the approval of his government, and, with that reservation, signed it within three days. The name of 'The Triple Alliance,' which has adhered to it since, might properly be given to it from this moment.

The treaty consisted of three clauses. By the first a defensive alliance between the contracting powers was stipulated for. The one who should be attacked had the right of claiming from the other forty vessels, 6,000 infantry, and 400 cavalry, or an equivalent subsidy—advances which were to be repaid three years after the termination of the war. The second and third clauses, of which one was public and the other secret, regulated the intervention of the two powers, which was justified, according to the declaration in the preamble, by 'the fear that the conflagration recently kindled by the rupture between the two crowns might be communicated to their neighbours if it were not extinguished at its birth.' In the public agreement the contracting powers adhered to the conditions of peace offered them by Louis XIV. They bound themselves to insure their acceptance by Spain, if necessary, by force; but they declared themselves mutually agreed to obtain from the King of France a truce until the end of May, which would give them time to persuade the Spanish Government to negotiate. They, moreover,

interdicted all conquests over the Netherlands to Louis XIV., even in the event of the refusal of Spain.

The secret clause was summed up in four articles. In it the contracting powers pledged themselves to use their good offices to procure peace between Spain and Portugal, which latter France had never ceased to succour. They stated that they had come to an agreement, either to insist upon the renunciation by Louis XIV. of the Spanish succession by the new treaty which he might conclude with Spain, or, at least, to prevent the insertion of any contrary clause. Lastly, they mutually agreed to declare war against the King of France, in the event of his not keeping to the conditions which he had proposed, and they undertook to continue it until they had despoiled him of his last conquests in Flanders, and re-established the position made for the two kingdoms by the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

Peace seemed to be thus assured, and even if it could not be obtained, the equilibrium of Europe was none the less guaranteed. By forcing Spain to abandon the places she had allowed to be taken from her, 'The Triple Alliance' gave Louis XIV. that satisfaction with which he had declared he would remain content. By not permitting him, on the other hand, to extend his conquests to that part of the Netherlands of which Spain was not yet dispossessed, it shielded the United Provinces from the dangerous vicinity of France. The policy so determinedly followed by the Grand Pensionary de Witt thus gained its end. He owed it to his understanding with Temple: 'All Christendom,' he writes to him later, 'owes you the glory of having first disposed the King of Great Britain to so strict an alliance between His Majesty and this State, for the universal good and peace of Europe.'

He gives him the same testimony in a letter written by him to Arlington in these commendatory terms: 'You cannot send any minister here, more capable, or more adapted to the tastes and spirit of this nation than Sir William Temple. He should be no less satisfied with the promptitude with which the States have concluded and signed the treaty for which he came here than they are with his behaviour, and the admirable

manner in which he has conducted himself throughout the negotiation. It would seem that you are a judge of men, and that you only give your friendship to those who merit it, since you find means to employ those who so worthily acquit themselves.'

Temple deserved this flattering opinion. By the boldness of his measures he had overcome seemingly insuperable obstacles. By hastening the issue, through the intervention of the States-General, instead of allowing it to be referred to the States of the provinces, he had cut short delays which would have ruined everything. He had, as De Witt said, 'performed a miracle.'

With a modesty which does him honour, Temple himself accounted for the success of his mission: 'They will needs have me pass here for one of great abilities, for having finished and signed in five days a treaty of such importance to Christendom. But I will tell you the secret of it. To draw things out of their centre, requires labour and address to put them in motion; but to make them return thither, nature helps so far, that there needs no more than just to set them agoing. Now I think a strict alliance is the true centre of our two nations. There was also another accident which contributed very much to this affair, and that was a great confidence arisen between the Pensioner and me. He is extremely pleased with me and my sincere open way of dealing; and I, with all the reason in the world, am infinitely pleased with him upon the same score, and look upon him as one of the greatest geniuses I have known, as a man of honour, and the most easie in conversation, as well as in business.'

This common work of the two ministers once accomplished, public satisfaction was freely expressed in the United Provinces. The Grand Pensionary, wishing to show his participation in it, gave a banquet, to which were invited the young Prince of Orange, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and most of the foreign ministers and their wives.

The ball which followed was opened by the Prince of Orange, and the dancing was continued by the Grand Pen-

sionary, who, according to a report of the time, 'achieved a great success.' The Prince of Orange was no less eager to celebrate an alliance which appeared to him to be so favourable to his cause by bringing together the United Provinces and his uncle, the King of England. He gave a fancy ball to over eight hundred guests, and acted the principal part in an allegorical prologue, intermingled with entries of fabulous personages, the principal ones being Apollo and the Muses, and Neptune and the Tritons. The external security, which the Republic believed to be thenceforth insured to it by the protection of its new allies, gave a national character to these rejoicings and helped to justify them.

It was over the King of France that the diplomatic victory, upon which the United Provinces prided themselves, was won. It checked him abruptly in the execution of the plans which he had conceived, at the very moment when he thought their success was infallible. The treaty which he had just concluded with the Emperor of Germany gave him reason in fact to imagine himself master of the destinies of Europe. Perseveringly returning to a negotiation which he had already begun, five months before his entry into Flanders, he had proposed to the Emperor Leopold an agreement for the regulation of the eventual inheritance of the King of Spain, without taking into account the renunciation he had made of it in the Treaty of the Pyrenees. This arrangement, made so secretly that it has only quite lately been discovered, had been the work of Chevalier de Gremonville, the French ambassador at Vienna, who by his clever audacity had ended by ruling the Emperor and his ministers. Whilst the Triple Alliance was being negotiated at the Hague, and four days before it was concluded, Gremonville, at a last audience, obtained the Emperor's consent to the division of Charles V.'s monarchy with the King of France. In consideration of the share left to the Emperor, Louis XIV. claimed for himself, besides the Netherlands, which were the principal object of his ambition, Franche-Comté, Navarre, the Philippines with the stations on the coast of Africa, Naples and Sicily. He thus secured for the future, in the event of a vacancy on the throne of Spain, not only

the neutrality, but even the complicity of the sovereign who seemed most interested in resisting him.

Having to so great a degree insured the speedy aggrandisement of his kingdom, Louis XIV. struck a fresh blow at Spain, which still refused peace. The Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, had even haughtily repulsed the offer of a truce, replying that 'he had no need to accept as a favour a suspension of hostilities which God Himself and the winter would necessarily impose.' Perhaps he hoped, by thus tempting Louis to continue the conquest of the Netherlands, to force the States-General to come to the assistance of Spain and to engage in a war against France. Louis was on his guard against this danger, and in again taking up arms to overcome the resistance of Spain, he meant at any rate to re-assure Europe by his apparent moderation, as well as to astonish it by the success of a new campaign. Anxious to prevent the coalition which was being formed between the United Provinces and England—and of the conclusion of which he was still in ignorance—and, since his treaty with the Emperor of Germany, awaiting with more patience the annexation of the whole of the Netherlands, he resolved to make himself master of Franche-Comté. This populous and fertile country, which was only attached to Spain by artificial ties, formed a threatening encroachment on the French soil, and placed the eastern frontier at a distance of forty leagues from the capital, from which it was equidistant with the northern frontier. Completely to re-assure the States, whom he thought it for his interest to treat with consideration, the King of France went so far as to let them know that he did not mean to profit by the conquest he was going to undertake in order to change the pacific overtures which he had made, being ready to surrender Franche-Comté if Spain relinquished the portion of the Netherlands of which he had possessed himself. It was an agreement which he had no doubt flattered himself he could evade: 'since no one could imagine,' writes the King of England's minister, Arlington, 'why the King of France should take the trouble to take more towns merely to restore them again.' His preparations, completed by the indefatigable activity

of Louvois, the Secretary of State for War, gave him complete confidence; and the winter season, which seemed to stand in the way of a new campaign, had allowed of their concealment. The Prince of Condé, governor of Burgundy and former conqueror of Spain, who had long been in disgrace, was appointed to command the expedition. Proud of again taking his place at the head of the French armies, he gradually collected in the province a body of 15,000 men, announcing that he was going to send them to manœuvre in Catalonia. He also had the condition of the fortified towns, and the number of troops available for the defence of the Spanish province, secretly investigated. The towns were almost all incapable of offering the slightest resistance. The troops were reduced to 2,000 men of the regulars, and the 10,000 militia distributed amongst the different garrisons of the province included many young artisans, who, with no means beyond their pay, had neither the habits nor tastes suited for warfare.

It sufficed to enter Franche-Comté to subdue it. Confident in the success which awaited him, Louis XIV. started suddenly in the middle of the winter from St. Germain, as if about to assist at a military promenade. After having ridden eighty miles in five days he rejoined his troops, who, during his rapid journey, had nearly reduced the province to submission. Two fortresses, Salins and Besançon, had already thrown open their gates, and Dôle, the capital of Franche-Comté, seemed only to have prolonged its resistance four days that it might await the arrival of the King of France, to whom it sent the keys. The parliament, which was sitting, took the oath of allegiance to him and went so far as to declare guilty of treason those former subjects of the King of Spain who refused to recognise their new sovereign. The capitulation of Gray was the last blow to the Spanish dominion, and the governor, the Marquis d'Yenne, who had failed to take measures for defence, hastened to make his submission. 'All that has happened,' writes Lionne to D'Estrades, 'is past belief.' A fortnight had sufficed to give, as by magic, a new province to France. The Spanish Government, con-

founded and humiliated by the overwhelming success of an invasion which they attributed to treason, scornfully declared that so great a king would have done better to send his footmen than to come himself to take possession of such a conquest.

While he was thus making his power felt and promising beforehand not to take advantage of it, Louis XIV. suddenly received news of the Triple Alliance. It required him to leave to Spain that portion of the Netherlands which he had not yet conquered. The speedy issue of the negotiations concluded at the Hague had baffled the intelligence he could usually count upon in his diplomacy. The perspicacity of Count d'Estrades had been foiled. John de Witt's declarations had reassured him. The Grand Pensionary had only communicated to him the last resolutions of the States, which insisted upon the necessity of forcing Spain to accept the proposals of peace, and he skilfully avoided laying any stress on the demand to be made upon the King of France to content himself, either with his conquests in the Netherlands, or with the acquisition of Franche-Comté, according to the alternative which Louis had himself offered to Spain. D'Estrades, being informed of the arrival of Temple at the Hague, had written that the projects for an offensive alliance against France, encouraged by the English ambassador, had not been approved by the Grand Pensionary, and he had paid no attention to any other proposals which might be settled between them. Instead of being put on the alert by the conferences entered into by the negotiators, he had announced that 'it would all end in smoke, and the King his master might snap his fingers at it.' Convinced that the constitution of the United Provinces, which imposed such slowness on the resolutions of the States, would give him time to baffle all diplomatic manœuvres, he was quietly awaiting the decision of the Assembly of the Provinces, never imagining that the States-General would take upon themselves to conclude a treaty. On the very eve of the signing of the Triple Alliance he had replied to those who would have had him fear the conclusion, 'We will talk of it again six weeks hence.'

Accordingly, when, on the day following the signing of the treaty, De Witt and Temple went to inform him of it, although he was still in ignorance of the articles which were to remain secret, he could not conceal his surprise and annoyance. He complained of impediments put in the way of the King's further enterprise against the Netherlands if Spain should refuse to yield, and threw out a hint that if there was any attempt at coercion, the King his master would not flinch, even if it caused a forty years' war. He, moreover, reproached the States who were the King of France's closest allies with having entered into fresh alliances without giving him any previous notice, and suggested the danger of his master's resentment. Nevertheless, to avert Louis's displeasure, Count d'Estrades was careful to modify in his despatches the bearing of the treaty which he had neither foreseen nor prevented.

In spite of the blame which he thought himself bound to lay upon the States, he attempted to exonerate them. 'Many of my friends amongst the members,' he says, 'have been hurt at the way in which I have spoken to them about this alliance. I am not sorry to leave them under such an impression, as it might contribute to induce them to give up things which they would not do if they thought the King was satisfied.' 'I should tell you,' he writes to Lionne a month later, 'that nothing can be better to all appearance than the way in which Holland has acted,' and he more than once renewed this assurance, which he wished to impress upon the court of France. So that, whether Louis XIV. were deceived, or merely wished to pretend not to observe the affront offered to him, he at first showed no irritation.

'To tell you my own individual feeling as to what has taken place,' wrote Lionne to D'Estrades, 'the basis appears to me good and advantageous to the King; the disagreeable style and the terms in which it is drawn up might certainly have been improved upon, but the sequel will show whether the intention is good or bad.'

The Grand Pensionary was also careful to maintain the circumspection necessary to be shown towards Louis XIV. Once the independence of the Netherlands guaranteed, his

only interest was to oblige Spain to give satisfaction to France, so as to prevent a renewal of a war, which the States were interested in diverting from their neighbourhood. He thenceforth undertook to reconcile the policy of concession with that of resistance, setting in action all the resources of diplomacy to prevent the King of France from taking offence at the engagement between the Republic and their new allies. The very day of the signing of the Triple Alliance he thus gives notice of it to one of the most active negotiators in the employment of Louis XIV., Prince William of Fürstenberg: 'I think I can inform you with certainty that the King of England has allowed himself to be persuaded to unite with this State, and to bind himself with us to assist France in the acquisition either of the towns she conquered in the last campaign, or of an equivalent for the surrender of those towns, an equivalent with which His Most Christian Majesty has declared that he will be contented.'

De Witt was the more ready to address himself to the Prince of Fürstenberg, that the latter had been sent by Louis XIV. to the Hague to submit to him the draft of a treaty for a peace with Spain, and it was to this treaty that the Grand Pensionary wished to seem to conform in negotiating the Triple Alliance. To persuade the King of France of this, De Witt represented to Count d'Estrades 'that it had not been possible to insert into the treaty the clause for a rupture with Spain, in the event of the court of Madrid refusing to accede to the proposals for peace, on account of the difficulties which some of the provinces would have made and from the necessity of an agreement with England.' But he added that the States would nevertheless obtain the conditions of peace for Louis XIV. as proposed to Spain. 'I have seen the deputies of Holland,' writes D'Estrades, 'and they have assured me that if they see any signs of England favouring the interests of Spain by not exacting from her the acceptance of the offers of France, Holland will break the engagement she has entered into with her, having it always at heart above all things to preserve the King's friendship.'

The sincerity of the Grand Pensionary's declarations is

clearly evinced in his correspondence with Temple. Urged by England to complete the engagements of the Triple Alliance by the conclusion of an offensive league with Spain against France so as to force Louis to make peace, in case of his refusal De Witt, far from encouraging this aggressive policy, tried to divert the English Government from it. 'Now we comprehend very well,' he writes, 'that such a concert and such a league as His Excellence desires would put the King of France upon an absolute necessity of continuing the war, because, if he should comply after such a league made with his enemies, it would appear publicly that he was obliged to it by this bond and consequently by his enemies themselves.' Whilst holding himself in readiness for an energetic intervention of the States against France should Louis show any intention of continuing his conquests, he was anxious not to seem to provoke him.

To be prepared against the resentment which they feared, the States-General hastened to send Van Beuningen back to France, as he had been well known and appreciated in his first embassy. His instructions were to follow out a policy of conciliation. He was to represent to Louis XIV. that if the States entered into a treaty with England it was to enforce peace upon Spain in the event of the King of France's offers not being accepted. 'M. de Witt assures me,' writes Count d'Estrades, 'that your Majesty will be satisfied with the conduct of the States, as soon as M. van Beuningen shall have informed your Majesty of all particulars on the subject of his mission.' Van Beuningen was careful to do all in his power to insure himself a favourable reception, and on the very day of his appointment to the embassy wrote to Lionne 'how much he had it at heart to be employed in obtaining recognition of his masters' good-will.'

The States could not give a better proof of it than in sparing neither pains nor efforts to make Spain yield, and thus prevent a renewal of the war. 'They were determined,' wrote De Witt, who thus gives in a few words his political programme, 'not to be led by the will of the Spanish Government, and as if out of mere wantonness, into a course which they

only intended to follow in the event of a fatal necessity.' The task was not easy. It was necessary almost to use force to Spain in order to save her. Spain had been the victim of an unjust aggression undertaken in spite of the renunciation of the King of France to the inheritance of the Infanta, his wife, and she could not consent to make the best of a bad business and preserve the rest of her possessions by the abandonment of some towns in the Netherlands. Preferring the continuation of war to the conclusion of peace, she wilfully blinded herself, and 'was always waiting,' wrote a Swedish envoy, 'for something of the nature of what she calls miracles to extricate herself.' Guaranteed by the Triple Alliance against the total loss of the Netherlands, she fancied she could with impunity refuse the sacrifice which was demanded of her. Although she was reduced to an impossibility of defending herself in the Netherlands or elsewhere, she hoped that the Powers who had just signed the Triple Alliance would not look on at her ruin.

In this conviction the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, Governor of the Netherlands at Brussels, who had obtained full powers to negotiate, instead of making use of them, opposed all concession and never ceased to encourage resistance by the court of Madrid. Having vainly tried to compromise the States and the Grand Pensionary with the King of France, in the hope of provoking a rupture, and having equally without success attempted to cut them off from England, so as to come to a direct understanding himself with Charles II., he set himself to protract the negotiations which the United Provinces were carrying on at Brussels. The States-General were there represented by two of their members, Burgersdyck, Pensionary of Leyden, and Van der Tocht, Pensionary of Gouda, who, according to the testimony of a contemporary, were wanting 'neither in ability nor in assurance.' They were enjoined to act in concert with the English ambassador, Temple, who was charged with the same mission. But the conferences only served to perpetuate the disagreement. 'They are not suited to one another,' writes Temple to De Witt; 'the Marquis is of a temper to face death rather than allow himself to be overmastered in the conduct and management

of affairs, and your members are only fit to be employed in places where you reign supreme.' The intentional dilatoriness of Castel-Rodrigo and the impatience of the negotiators for the States renewed each day the scenes of discord. Temple describes the scene in vivid colours in a letter to Arlington of March 16, 1668: 'The Marquis,' he writes, 'is not the easiest of access, nor the quickest at dispatch: and his officers are at the same rate; the Dutch deputies are all upon the spur, and, when they demand an audience or a paper, if they have it not within half an hour they say the Marquis is trifling with them, and write at once to the States that he is only making delays, wishing thereby to involve them in war. They reason him to death upon every point. The Marquis, who used to owe no man anything in that kind, grows ten times more difficult by that time they have talked an hour than he was at first, and engaging in long discourses gives them twenty occasions of growing warm upon the place and wise afterwards by interpretations that God knows were never in the case; so that, in their audiences, between the Marquis' eloquence and their Leyden philosophy the cards commonly run high, and all is pique and repique between them, and I am to go to one and t'other next day to set all right again, and endeavour to make them agree upon points which they could by no means agree upon together.'

This conciliatory intervention of Temple and the resolute firmness of the Grand Pensionary ended by triumphing over the hesitation and ill-will of the Spanish Government. 'Spain cannot now embroil us with France in spite of ourselves,' writes De Witt to Meerman, the ambassador for the States in England, and we will apply to them, if necessary, these words, *Cuncta prius tentanda, sed immedicabile vulnus ense recidendum est*: 'Everything must be tried first, but then if necessary we must use the knife.'

Having made up his mind to obtain perfect satisfaction for the King of France rather than allow him to undertake to get it for himself, the Grand Pensionary informed the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo 'that if needed, to put an end to his intolerable hesitation, the States army would occupy Flanders as

an enemy.' Wishing to prove that this was not an empty threat, the States addressed a similar communication to the King: 'M. de Witt has assured me,' said D'Estrades, 'that the States and England will give the Marquis no peace until he has consented, and if he will not they will break with him.' According to Temple, 'Spain must either go out by the door, or jump out of window.'

Once convinced that he would have to yield, Castel-Rodrigo resigned himself to submission, and—as the deputies of the States wrote—'was dragged like a victim to the altar.' He began by consenting to the truce which Spain was so manifestly interested in accepting, and the refusal of which had cost him Franche-Comté. After many evasions he at last consented to prolong it till the end of May, according to the proposals of England and the States, who in the interests of Spain held to the continuation of the negotiations. He was in reality receiving a favour, but, with his usual haughtiness, he wished to appear to be making a concession. Not being satisfied with the mere suspension of hostilities, the allies further exacted that the Governor of the Spanish Netherlands should agree to accept the terms of the King of France, who proposed either to keep the conquests he had already made in the Netherlands, or to receive as compensation Franche-Comté, with Aine, St. Omer, and Cambrai.

To evade a definite answer, Castel-Rodrigo gave them to understand that he accepted the alternative, without saying which of the two offers he chose.

After a delay of ten days, he decided on the course least expected. Contrary to the wishes and previsions of John de Witt, he made up his mind to leave to the King of France the towns of the Netherlands of which Louis had already made himself master: Charleroi, Alt, Oudenarde, Tournay, Courtrai, Douai, and Lille. He would thus obtain the restitution of Franche-Comté, which, if taken from Spain, would cut him off from all communication with Lorraine and the Empire. Relinquishing as hopeless the towns which served as barriers to the Netherlands, henceforth dismembered, Castel-Rodrigo thus revenged himself on the States, whom he

could not forgive for having forced peace upon him, condemning them in the future to constant alarms, by exposing them to the vicinity of Louis XIV. He flattered himself, moreover, that he had made the final conquest of the Spanish Provinces an irresistible temptation henceforth to the King of France. The fear of such an attempt would, it seemed to him, suffice to keep the Republic of the United Provinces and England to the offensive league which they had secretly guaranteed to one another, if France refused to make peace. 'The Marquis hated the peace,' writes Temple, 'upon either of the alternatives, and desired nothing but the continuance of the war, with the assistance of England and Holland.' Moreover, the governor of the Netherlands was persuaded that in accepting the terms of Louis XIV. he forced the King to withdraw from his engagements, and this idea was not far from being justified.

After having been accepted with a very ill grace by Spain, peace was very near being refused by France. The two negotiators of the allies at Paris—Van Beuningen for the United Provinces, and Sir John Trevor for England—had to overcome a series of obstacles before they succeeded in their mission. Louis could not be indifferent to the Triple Alliance, and, notwithstanding his first promptly dispelled illusions, he had soon recognised the blow given to his ambition. Some vague information as to the secret articles having reached his ears, he vainly demanded their tenor from De Witt. The Grand Pensionary replied that he had sworn not to divulge them to anyone, whereupon D'Estrades intimated to him 'that the King would find them out by other means, without any obligation to him.'

Being informed by a communication from the Marquis de Ruvigny, his ambassador in England, of the conventions of the allies, the French King's resentment broke out on the subject of the article of the secret treaty in which they stipulated that, should Louis XIV. refuse their proposals for peace, they would attack him by land and sea until France was brought back to the limits prescribed by the Treaty of the Pyrenees. He considered this convention as an affront,

although it had never been intended to be made public, and was not to take effect if he remained satisfied with his last offers, and he made use of it to justify his irritation on finding himself checked by the Triple Alliance in his designs upon the Netherlands. 'The behaviour of the States,' writes Lionne, 'would try the patience of the most moderate man in the world. Imagine, then, the effect it must have upon the heart of a great monarch, who places his honour before any other consideration, and cannot endure to seem forced by his fears to do that which he would have been ready to perform of his own accord, in order to acquire the glory of moderation.' According to the declaration which the French ambassador at the Hague was commissioned to transmit to the Grand Pensionary, 'his master was too great a prince, and too jealous of his honour, to submit to the will of the States.' Anxious to reinstate himself in the King's good graces by humouring his feelings of resentment, Count d'Estrades assured him that he need have no fears of a war. 'The combined league,' he writes to Lionne, 'will not be ready to take their armies into the field under three months, and the King will have plenty of time to work out his great scheme.'

Louis XIV. met with similar encouragement from his generals. The Prince of Condé and Marshal Turenne represented to him that the allies would be taken unawares, and promised him the entire conquest of the Netherlands before the end of the campaign; and the King of France showed much disposition to evade the proposals of peace, either by taking advantage of the shiftiness of Spain, or by similar conduct on his own part. Van Beuningen, in his uneasiness, went so far as to accuse him 'of having the designs of a Cyrus or an Alexander.' The military preparations justified the fear of a rupture of the negotiations, and the signal for the renewal of hostilities seemed given by the taking of the little town of Genappe, which opened the way to Brussels. 'Orders have been sent to all the army corps,' writes the English envoy Sir John Trevor from Paris, 'and it is a deadly sin here to talk of peace.'

It was not only the exhaustion of Spain and the supposed

powerlessness of her new allies that inspired Louis XIV. with confidence. He hoped to separate them and so easily break through their agreement. Count d'Estrades, being commissioned to instil distrust into the States in regard to the King of England, by making them doubt Charles's fidelity to their cause, showed the Grand Pensionary a letter from the French ambassador in London. It announced that Charles had sent to Louis by Arlington a copy of the secret articles of the Triple Alliance, a piece of information which De Witt in his own good faith refused to believe. To make a more decided impression upon the Grand Pensionary's mind, by causing him fresh anxiety, Lionne writes to D'Estrades: 'I have private information that there is an understanding between the Emperor's minister Lisola and the English ministers, to engage the States to take some action against the King, and thereafter to leave them to bear the weight of the burden alone. It is easy to understand that, once this has occurred, the cabals against M. de Witt would have a fine opportunity of establishing the Prince of Orange, and of ruining M. de Witt. It is for him, who is so clever, to judge whether or no there is a chance of this project succeeding, and of the means he must take to prevent it.' These communications, which were confirmed by after events, were made in all sincerity, but they seemed to be so much in the interests of France, that De Witt might well consider them suspicious. He had, moreover, too much greatness of mind to allow himself to be turned aside by party interests from the end which he had in view of placing the independence of the republic beyond attack, and his readiness to sacrifice his interests to his duty would not permit him to leave the United Provinces at the mercy of a too powerful neighbour.

Faithful to a policy from which he had never swerved, the Grand Pensionary was impervious to any intimidation, and followed with his accustomed perseverance the path he had traced out for himself. He had paved the way for the success of the negotiations by forcing Spain to yield, and he completed it by showing the King of France that the United Provinces would not allow him to continue his conquests with impunity.

He had not hesitated to declare 'that the United Provinces would be ready in case of necessity to act in concert with England, not only for the defence of the Netherlands, but also in attacking and harassing France with their naval forces, even by raids and invasions of that country, or in any other way.' He admitted 'that, out of prudence, the possibility of a conflict with the King of France should be considered; and that nothing should be neglected to provide against such an emergency.' When he had reason to fear that the United Provinces might be forced to make war, he did not conceal from D'Estrades that, in spite of their wish to avoid it, they should feel themselves obliged to sustain it, if provoked by Louis XIV. 'I know well,' he says, 'that the worst thing that could happen to the States would be to fall out with France, but this disaster would be inevitable if the King of France should attack the Netherlands after the States had forced Spain to accept the conditions upon which the King had offered peace.'

The defection of Portugal, who had ended by treating with Spain, was of assistance to the United Provinces in rendering Louis more tractable. It deprived him of an ally who had hitherto been useful to him in harassing Spain on her frontier. After the domestic revolution which had deprived Alfonso VI. of his throne and made his brother Dom Pedro regent, the war which had lasted between Spain and Portugal for twenty-six years was suspended, and the court of Madrid had taken the opportunity to make proposals of peace, which had been favourably received at Lisbon.

It was upon Sweden that the guarantee of peace between France and Spain principally depended. But Sweden was very near deceiving the expectations of the States-General. The engagement by which she was associated in the treaty of the Triple Alliance had only been made provisionally by Count Dohna, with a reservation as to the approval of the Swedish Government. The Grand Chancellor attempted to get it rejected. Thinking that an unpardonable advantage had been taken of his absence by his adversaries to give Count Dohna the authority of which he availed himself at

the Hague, Magnus de la Gardie had returned to his seat in the Senate to prevent authority being given to the Swedish ambassador to sanction the treaty by definitely signing it. He brought forward the most urgent reasons for delay, and made known his opinion in writing, intending to use it as a protest. The Senate took no notice and confirmed their orders to Count Dohna to finish what he had begun, without taking any notice of the tardy proposals of the French ambassador. Nevertheless Sweden did not intend to give her co-operation for nothing, and Count Dohna, who had made the participation of his government with the States and England subordinate to the promise of subsidies, imperiously demanded the stipulated payments. 'It is time,' writes De Witt, 'to put the Swedish army on her proper footing if she is to do the service she ought, and it would be deplorable if the money which would put life into this body should not be found in time.' The States accordingly unceasingly demanded this pecuniary assistance from the court of Madrid. They claimed a right to place to her account the expenses of an alliance which would preserve to her what remained of her possessions in the Netherlands. To help her they entered into negotiations with Don Estevan de Gamarra for a treaty, suggested by John de Witt, which would make them the creditors of the Spanish Government. By the terms of this proposal the United Provinces were to receive as security several towns in Upper Guelders in return for a loan of 2,000,000 florins to Spain, two of which were to go to the Swedish subsidies.

Whilst this convention was kept pending by the delays and unwillingness of the Spanish Government, Count Dohna, who had returned to London as ambassador to Charles II., urged the envoys of the republic and the English commissioners to bring to an end the conferences which were needlessly prolonging the negotiations intended to ensure the accomplishment of the Triple Alliance. He told them 'that if he could not obtain satisfaction, Sweden, instead of having a grievance against Spain, would rather have cause to complain of England and the United Provinces.' He declared that if the answer he demanded were not transmitted to him

before the departure of the next courier, the Swedish Government would consider themselves at liberty to take other measures. Mutual concessions helped to bring about an understanding. Overcoming the final delays of the court of Madrid, the negotiators of England and the republic came to an understanding with Count Molina, the Spanish minister in London, to determine the amount of the subsidies, Count Dohna on his side being content, instead of an immediate payment, with an agreement by which the allies pledged themselves to use their utmost efforts to induce Spain to discharge within a given period the subsidies undertaken by her.

The conditions of the agreement thus prepared were soon concluded with the Swedish ambassador, who only survived the success of his diplomacy by a few days. The subsidies promised by Spain amounted to 480,000 crowns. The King of England and the States-General bound themselves to exact payment from Spain within eight days of the ratification of the treaty by the King of Sweden, and the allies declared that in default of such payment they would withdraw all assistance from Spain. Once satisfied by the grant of the subsidies, the Swedish Government definitively confirmed the conditional signature which had been affixed to the treaty by Count Dohna, and the place left vacant for the King of Sweden, as a principal contracting party, was at last filled up. The Triple Alliance which had hitherto been merely contingent was now an established fact, and seemed to be the surest pledge of the preservation of the Netherlands to Spain.

These happy negotiations might not perhaps have sufficed to prevent the King of France from keeping up the war, had they not been supported by military preparations which Louis could not ignore. Spain seemed at last disposed to take measures for defence. Don Juan of Austria had accepted the governorship of the Netherlands, and was to take 10,000 men with him. England, on her part, had not remained idle: Parliament had met in February to vote an estimate of 300,000*l.* to Charles II. for the expenses of equipping a fleet.

The States-General set the example to their allies, and

actively pushed forward their preparations. In spite of the efforts of Gourville, the French envoy, they obtained a contingent of 6,000 men from the Princes of Brunswick-Luneburg. They also accepted the offers of the Duke of Lorraine, who, fearing the intentions of the King of France, undertook, if he were admitted to the Triple Alliance, to bring 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse into the field at the first summons. The States did not depend only upon the assistance of auxiliary troops. They re-organised their own army and determined to add 12,000 men by fresh levies. They wished to assure themselves of an available military force, without the necessity of stripping the fortresses, now occupied by numerous garrisons. They proposed to establish two camps: one on the Scheldt at Bergen-op-Zoom within reach of the Spanish Netherlands; the other on the Yssel at Zutphen for the protection of their frontier. They were prepared to send into the field, as soon as the weather permitted, their whole force of cavalry, 3,700 strong, with 25 regiments of infantry, and asserted that 'they had on foot the most magnificent troops it was possible to see.' They at the same time filled up their principal military appointments, thus putting an end to the long contests which had left them vacant. The command of the army was given to the two major-generals—Prince John Maurice of Nassau, and Wurtz—under whose orders the Prince of Orange was prepared to serve; but the States reserved to themselves the military direction by the powers they gave to seven of their members, representing the seven provinces, who were appointed as their delegates to the camp. The strengthening of their naval forces seemed no less necessary. They fitted out forty-eight men of war, the number of which was eventually to be made up to eighty. 'There is no doubt,' wrote D'Estrades later, 'that had His Majesty not concluded matters by his great discretion, the States would have drawn him into a war, and would have used the enormous sums at their disposal to maintain it.'

The Grand Pensionary would not have shrunk from this extremity, though he did all in his power to prevent it. 'When by obtaining from Spain the satisfaction she ought to give,' he writes to Temple, 'the King of France shall have

been placed under the necessity, either of proceeding to the final conclusion of peace, or of acknowledging his warlike intentions, there will not be the slightest hesitation here in marching to the assistance of the Netherlands, on the very first attempt he makes upon them, if the King of Great Britain will do as much.' Temple constantly encouraged this disposition. 'We cannot follow out a better plan,' he replies to De Witt, 'than that of showing our strength and being prepared for war before it comes; for, as we should draw it upon ourselves by any appearance of wishing for peace, we must on the contrary secure peace by appearing to wish for war.' The Grand Pensionary's policy was identical with that thus marked out by Temple, and whilst taking the necessary measures for intimidating the King of France he was anxious above all to satisfy him. The aim he had before him was the prolongation of the truce, so that peace might become inevitable. 'The States are absolutely of opinion with me,' writes Temple, 'that no treaty can begin with good intentions on the French side unless they consent to a suspension of arms.' Louis would only consent to grant a truce till the end of March, but promised not to take advantage of any fresh conquest he might make, until the 15th of May, if peace could be concluded before that time.

The States did not believe in either the efficacy or the sincerity of this proposal. The restriction of the truce to the end of March seemed to give them too little time to accomplish the work of negotiation, and they demanded that it should be prolonged to the 15th of May. Louis's promise to give up any fresh conquest if peace should be concluded, did not reassure them. 'If all our good offices and offers to make Spain ratify what the Marquis has accepted,' writes Temple to De Witt, 'are not sufficient to withhold them six weeks from what they pretend to restore, how will they be capable of restoring for ever what they have already taken?' 'The States,' boldly declared Van Beuningen to Louis XIV.'s ministers, 'cannot but consider what the King may, rather than what he will, do.'

To obtain from Louis XIV. the concession without which

peace again ran the risk of being called in question, De Witt, recognising the necessity for the greatest circumspection, renewed his counsels of prudence. He was afraid that Van Beuningen's too great vehemence might carry him away, and advised him to neglect no forms of courtesy, but never to yield on the main point. He was careful to make excuses to the French ambassador at the Hague for the impetuosity to which the ambassador for the States had given way, and begged that the King would not heed it. He was so conciliatory, that Lionne writes to D'Estrades: 'Pray tell M. de Witt that if I could spend a couple of hours with him I would answer for the certainty of peace, as I know how reasonable he is, and how fertile in expedients for overcoming all difficulties.'

Anxious to justify this good opinion, the Grand Pensionary resolved to deprive Louis XIV. of his sole pretext against a prolongation of the truce. The King refused to consent, on the plea that it would not help towards peace; and, to justify this allegation, he accused the Spanish Regent of not having given the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, governor of the Netherlands, sufficient powers to render the treaty valid. The Grand Pensionary hastened to cut short this objection, by obtaining orders that the ambassadors of the United Provinces and of England, accredited to the King of France, should make themselves sureties for peace. They entered into an engagement with Louis by the terms of which it was to be forced upon Spain by the allies, if the court of Madrid did not ratify Castel-Rodrigo's acceptance of the King's proposals. 'M. de Witt,' writes D'Estrades, 'has added in the most impressive terms, that if the King, having henceforth in his hands such absolute assurance of peace, refuses to suspend hostilities until the end of May, there will be no one but will believe that it has always been his determination to evade it altogether.'

Louis could no longer plead any justification for his conduct, if he belied himself by retracting his offers. By a last effort he resigned himself to moderation, without relinquishing the ambitious hopes which he contented himself with post-

poning. 'I saw,' he writes in his own memoirs, 'that if I stubbornly determined upon war now, the league which was forming itself to maintain it would eventually remain as a permanent barrier to my legitimate claims, whilst by giving way readily I should destroy it at its birth, and give myself leisure to find work for the allies which would prevent their meddling with whatever time might offer me.'

The three ministers who represented him in the conferences held with the ambassadors of the United Provinces and of England, Lionne, Colbert, and Letellier, were opposed to the continuance of war, thinking that France was not sufficiently prepared for it, either by her alliances, or by the financial resources which were at her disposal. They helped on with goodwill the speedy issue of the negotiations, and, as soon as the guarantee of the acceptance of peace by Spain had been given by the envoys of the States and those of the court of Madrid, they did their best to bring about a final understanding. Lionne drew up, in concert with the two plenipotentiaries of the allies—Van Beuningen and Trevor—the draft of a treaty between France and Spain, by which Louis declared himself irrevocably engaged, provided Spain gave her consent. To guard against any vexatious debates being raised by a new interpretation of the Treaty of the Pyrenees on the subject of the clause of the renunciation of the inheritance of the Spanish monarchy, the King of France was to declare 'that the contracting parties did not propose to acquire any rights, nor would they suffer any prejudice to their respective claims.'

Having thus regulated the conditions of peace, the negotiators agreed on the conditions of the truce. Louis XIV.'s ministers consented to prolong it till the end of May. They only demanded that, 'in the event of peace not being concluded after the expiration of that time, Spain, as a just punishment, should be forced to accept any conditions, however onerous, which the King of France, aided by the allies, might impose by force of arms.' The urgent counsels of John de Witt in favour of a policy of conciliation easily prevailed over the adverse opinion of the commissioners of the States, which he thought improper and superfluous. The satisfaction

demanded by the King of France was accorded to him under the conditions of the agreement made by Louis to keep within the limits of the line of demarcation which should be settled for him in the Netherlands, until the month of August; and, this transaction being happily carried through, the preliminary conventions of peace were signed at St. Germain.

It only remained to convert them into a treaty. At the beginning of the year, Spain and France, at the suggestion of the German Princes, had chosen Aix-la-Chapelle for the assembly of a congress. They now despatched thither their plenipotentiaries. The Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, to whom the Spanish Government had left the direction of the negotiations, had sent from Brussels his delegate, Ferdinand van Broekhoven, Baron of Bergeyck. Louis had given powers to the Marquis Colbert de Croissy, his ambassador at London and brother of the minister Colbert; and Beverningh and Temple were at the same time commissioned by the States and the King of England to represent the mediating powers, to whose intervention peace was due. The negotiators were to meet under the presidency of the Archbishop of Trebizond, nuncio of Pope Clement IX., who had proffered his paternal intervention for the reconciliation of the two Catholic courts. All difficulties seemed to be at an end, the two envoys of France and Spain having received orders 'not to change a word in the project.' 'I hope,' writes Arlington, 'that all may be concluded in an hour's time, as there is nothing more to haggle about.' 'It is to you,' writes De Witt to Temple, 'that we chiefly owe the present goodwill of the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, and the enjoyment of the great advantages which ensue for Christendom. I speak of it as a thing we already possess, as I see nothing which could now deprive us of it.'

Nevertheless, the conclusion of the negotiations was again endangered by unexpected obstacles. 'The intelligence we receive from Brussels is enough to turn one's head,' writes De Witt to Temple, in much anxiety. The injurious proceedings of Louis XIV. had, in fact, encouraged the Spanish Government to start fresh objections for the purpose of

delaying the conclusion of peace. Whilst the negotiations were proceeding, the King of France was committing depredations of all kinds in the Netherlands, to the amount of more than five hundred thousand francs. He, moreover, destroyed all the fortifications in Franche-Comté: 'so as to return that province to Spain in such a condition that he could at any moment again render himself master of it,' as he himself declares in his memoirs. By his own admission, therefore, the reproaches of the allies were justified. The English minister Arlington, speaking very strongly of his conduct, writes thus: 'We live in very extraordinary times, when even the appearance of morality is ridiculed.' The Spanish Government, on its side, showed a great want of straightforwardness in the execution of the engagements entered into for the signing of the treaty, and Baron de Bergeyck, the envoy from the Netherlands, put the negotiators out of all patience by his captious criticisms. Some violent scenes ensued, in which Beverningh, the plenipotentiary of the States, nearly drew his sword upon him in the presence of Temple. Baron de Bergeyck at first pretended that he had not the necessary authority to pledge the court of Madrid. Forced to acknowledge that he had received it, he tried other evasions and took up a point of etiquette, by disputing the precedence in signing which the Marquis de Croissy had reserved to himself. Disconcerted by the readiness with which the French ambassador left him at liberty to sign two other copies as he pleased, he found himself at the end of his expedients for delay, and consented at length to the conclusion of the long-deferred treaty of peace.

Scarcely had he signed before he had recourse to a final ruse, to procure the Spanish Government a means of contesting its validity. He took upon himself the title of ambassador, having hitherto only been known as a delegate from the governor of the Netherlands, leaving to the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo the title of plenipotentiary for the court of Madrid. This trick was foiled, and the court of France, mistrusting the subterfuges of the Spanish Government, imperatively insisted that the most precise formalities should be observed in the ratification. Peace was proclaimed simultaneously at Paris

and Brussels on May 29, seventeen days after the signing of the treaty at Aix-la-Chapelle.

This peace, which saved Spain in spite of herself, was very advantageous to France. It insured important acquisitions to Louis XIV., which extended the frontiers of his kingdom, and commenced the dismemberment of the Netherlands. It at the same time gave Europe an apparent pledge of moderation on his part, which he profited by to boast 'that it was solely his desire for peace which had disarmed him.' It was none the less the Triple Alliance which had obliged him to stop short in his conquests. Threatened by a European coalition, he had shown a wise policy in ceasing to defy it.

Convinced that the neighbourhood of France was incompatible with the security of the republic, the States-General had been forced to oppose it. The invasion of the Netherlands by Louis XIV., in defiance of the promises he had made to them of a preliminary agreement, had driven them to the absolute necessity of finding an alliance to replace that which had existed for over half a century between France and the United Provinces. But they could only partially trust their new allies. They did not want to be too closely bound to Spain, not expecting much assistance from her, and if they lent her their aid, it was not to preserve the integrity of the Spanish monarchy, but that their own independence might not be compromised. England appeared a doubtful ally. She had always, under Charles II. as under Cromwell, been the rival of the republic, with whom she had been reconciled, within the last year only, by the Peace of Breda. Her late humiliations would probably make her angry feelings both violent and lasting, and the Grand Pensionary had only been induced to appeal to her after many misgivings, to prevent Louis from completing the conquest of the Netherlands.

De Witt did not shut his eyes to the formidable dangers of a rupture with France, and had set himself to avert them. He would only in the last extremity have entered upon a war 'by which Spain alone would have profited, whilst the States-General would have had to bear the risks and expenses.' He

sought in the Triple Alliance a guarantee for the peace mutually agreed upon by the two belligerent powers, and, taking upon himself the part of mediator, was proud of filling it, while scrupulously adhering to his policy.

At one time he stated that 'if France refused to sign the treaty he would not hesitate to give without stint the most thorough support to Spain, in whose favour the States would act by land and sea;' at another time he declared that 'if the obstacles to peace came from the Spanish Government he would only seek the surest means of reducing them to reason, and, if necessary, would come to an understanding with the King of France.' He thus moderated the pretensions of Louis XIV., obtained the necessary concessions from the Spanish Government, and insured the acceptance of conditions of peace which seemed sufficient for the security of the United Provinces.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by bringing to a favourable termination these laborious negotiations, enabled the States-General to reap the benefit of the Triple Alliance, and completed for them the glory of the Peace of Breda which had been forced upon England. They might now consider themselves as the arbiters of Europe, and they congratulated themselves with somewhat rash pride on a diplomatic victory which was in a few years' time to cost them so dear. The medal struck on the occasion of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle still testifies to the high opinion which the republic had of herself and wished to give to others. In it she is represented in the figure of a woman leaning against a trophy, holding a pike surmounted by a helmet, and followed at a distance by several vessels, the double symbol of her liberty and her power. The inscription engraved in Latin on the reverse is thus worded: 'Having reconciled Kings, re-established liberty on the sea, brought peace upon the earth by force of arms, and pacified Europe, the States of the United Provinces have caused this medal to be struck, 1668.' They boasted only of what they had done, and had every right to congratulate themselves on the glorious success of that foreign policy for which they were indebted to their great minister.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERNAL PACIFICATION—THE PERPETUAL EDICT.

The Orange party without a leader—Death of Prince William Frederick of Nassau—Rivalry between Zealand and Holland—Revival of the Orange party in Holland—Resignation of Beverningh as treasurer-general—Manifestations in favour of the Prince of Orange—Resistance of the Grand Pensionary—His attempt at conciliation—The States of Holland undertake the education of the young Prince—De Witt assumes the direction of it—Advantageous position in which the young Prince is placed—The King of France restores to him the principality of Orange—Project of agreement for his entering the Council of State, and for the separation of the civil and military offices—The Grand Pensionary's plan changed by the proposed abolition of the Stadtholdership—The Perpetual Edict voted by the States of Holland and sworn to by the town councils—Irritation of the other provinces—Attempt at a coalition against Holland—Project of Harmony prepared by De Witt—The provinces of Guelders and Overyssel give in their adhesion to it—Negotiations with the provinces of Friesland, Groningen, and Zealand to obtain their consent—Apparent good terms between the Prince of Orange and De Witt—Success of the home and foreign policy of the Grand Pensionary—His happiness in private life—His correspondence with his wife during his mission to the fleet—His children, his fortune, his home—Death of his wife—His sorrow—Letters of condolence—His fourth re-election as Grand Pensionary—The services which he rendered—The remuneration which he received—His virtues and his merits as a statesman—His portraits.

Internal troubles had not been wanting to the governing party and to its illustrious head, the Grand Pensionary of Holland. Whilst the republic had been plunged into the dangers of a war with England, the Orange party had been making fresh efforts to gain the mastery, but the far-seeing and energetic policy of John de Witt had shut the door against them. As long as hostilities lasted he had succeeded in making any attempt at restoration in favour of the King of England's nephew appear dangerous to the safety of the State. But when Charles II.'s support became necessary to the republic to restrain Louis XVI.'s

ambition, the Grand Pensionary, driven to have recourse to an English alliance, took measures in time to prevent its forcing upon them a change of government, to the benefit of the Prince of Orange.

The weakening of the Orange party, now without a leader, proved most opportune for him. Of the two Princes of the late Stadtholder's family who might have acted as guardians to William II.'s young son, one, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, lieutenant-general in command of the cavalry, had held himself aloof, and sought to play no part in politics, in order that he might win the favour of the republican party; the other, Prince William Frederick, grand master of the artillery, had made friends with John de Witt, but with all his efforts had not been able to obtain the rank of major-general. Moreover, he had died shortly before from an accident. Being in command of an expedition in favour of the Prince of East Friesland against the Bishop of Münster, whilst besieging the town of Dylerschans, he mortally wounded himself with a pistol he was trying. The partisans of the Prince of Orange, who had not despaired of finding in him a defender of their interests, could not conceal how dismayed and disheartened they were at losing him. 'The weight of such a misfortune has quite stunned us,' wrote one of them. His widow Albertina Agnes, daughter of the Stadtholder Frederick Henry and the Princess-Dowager, became guardian of his son, Henry Casimir, aged seven years, who succeeded to his father's office as Stadtholder of Friesland and Groningen, but without the power of exercising his functions. His minority reduced the two provinces, now deprived of their head, to powerlessness. The Princess of Nassau, following her husband's example, seemed inclined to disown, rather than to support, the opposition to the new government. 'She does not approve,' writes Count d'Estrades, 'of the sentiments in which her nephew is being brought up, of seeking no other protection than that of the King of England; and as his education is so opposed to what she considers proper, she takes no further interest in his affairs.'

Zealand alone had any power to trouble the republican

party in its victory, in consequence of the appointment of the new councillor pensionary whom it had selected, Peter de Huybert. The death of Adrian Veth had left vacant the post of minister for the States of that Province. John de Witt had vainly sought it for one of his political friends. His confidential agents—the advocate Seroskerk and his relation Daniel Fannius, fiscal of the Admiralty of Zealand, who kept up an active correspondence with him to account for the use of the secret funds with the disposal of which he was entrusted—took infinite trouble, but to no purpose. They only succeeded in delaying the election, and four months after the death of Veth, Peter de Huybert replaced him.

A member of one of the principal families in Zealand, Peter de Huybert, who at twenty-four had entered the council of Middleburg, had distinguished himself by the part which he took in the negotiations during the Northern war. Sent successively to the Elector of Brandenburg and to the King of Sweden, he had prepared himself for a leading position by filling the post of secretary to the States of the Province. He won their confidence by remaining faithful to the cause of the House of Orange, 'whose devoted servant,' according to the testimony of a contemporary, 'he was.' His talents, his energy, his experience in public affairs, the power given to him by his office, and by that of his cousin, Justus de Huybert, who succeeded him as secretary to the States of Zealand, pointed to him as a possible rival of the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

To wean him from the Orange party, De Witt encouraged his mistrust of the deputies of Vere and Flushing, who, holding their position at the option of the Prince of Orange, the Lord Paramount of the two towns, aspired to the leadership of the States of the Province. The Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, anxious to maintain the prerogatives of his office, and supported by the members of the other towns, disputed the privileges arrogated to themselves by the deputies of Vere and Flushing, and claimed for the States of the Province, whose prime minister he was, the free exercise of their sovereignty. The marriage of his nephew Regensberck with the daughter of Thibault, the head of the

Republican party in Zealand, skilfully promoted by John de Witt from political motives, was a still surer pledge of a mutual understanding, and gave the Grand Pensionary of Holland hopes that he would find in Huybert an ally instead of a rival.

But it was not only against Zealand that the States of Holland had to take precautions.

To remain masters of the government of the confederation, they had still another danger to avert, that of the internal dissensions in their province. The unhappy beginning of the war with England had caused these to revive, and the re-establishment of the Prince of Orange in his father's functions had again become the war-cry of the malcontents. At Rotterdam the magistrates were threatened by a rising of the populace even in the town hall.

At Leyden the crier who proclaimed a levy on behalf of the States was thrown into the water. The mob loudly clamoured that the levy should be made in the name of the Prince of Orange, and the burgomaster who presided at the enlistment thought it necessary to satisfy their demands. At the ports the sailors showed the same feeling, and it was shared by their officers. Admiral Obdam, although loaded with favours by the States of Holland, had none the less, it was said, secretly promised the Prince of Orange to declare himself on his side if he was victorious, but Obdam having perished in the first battle fought against the English fleet, Tromp, who hoped to succeed him, assured the Prince of Orange that victory could not be hoped for on the sea unless the force was placed under his orders.

The assembling in the following year of an army corps of 12,000 men, which was to be employed in the defence of the Republic against the Bishop of Münster, nearly paved the way for the success of a military conspiracy. The two commissioners whom the provinces of Guelders and Overyssel had appointed to superintend the expedition, had promised to present the young Prince to the troops. De Witt, warned in time, postponed his departure.

The Calvinist clergy, on their side, indulged in seditious

preachings. They took advantage of the prayers which had been appointed to be said to plead the necessity for a speedy restoration. The States were obliged to threaten with their displeasure those ministers who treated of public affairs in the pulpit and made themselves the accusers of the government. One of them, Thaddæus Landmann, who had taken for his text these words from the prophet Hosea: 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now,' was suspended from his ministry until he had humbly apologised. The most fiery of the ministers at the Hague, Simon Simonides, having preached against ingratitude, and having imputed the public misfortunes to forgetfulness of the benefits which Holland owed to the House of Orange, thought fit to lay the blame on De Witt, and made the most offensive allusions to him. The town magistrate ordered him to apologise personally to the Grand Pensionary. The latter received him with his customary politeness and kept him to dinner, only requesting him gently to be more careful in the observance of his duties as a clergyman; but he did not succeed in disarming his implacable resentment.

The most faithful of John de Witt's friends were discouraged. In spite of his urgent entreaties, Beverningh, in whom he had placed the utmost confidence, suddenly failed him, retired to his country house, and resigned his office of treasurer-general to the United Provinces. 'Having no children to leave anything to, he would not,' he said, 'kill himself with business,' and gave this as his reason for retiring. Alarmed at the danger to the republic of the war with England, and foreseeing an approaching change of government, he did not conceal from Count d'Estrades 'that his reason for not remaining in office was that matters were getting too complicated.' The magistrates and deputies of Amsterdam themselves, who had hitherto been the leaders of the republican party, showed some hesitation; 'which,' sorrowfully writes De Witt to Van Beuningen, 'has set the example of want of courage to some others, who, as you know, had not too much to lose.'

The absence of the Grand Pensionary, who had so cou-

rageously embarked with the fleet, had deprived the States of Holland of their usual defender.

His most faithful friend, Nicholas Vivien, who in his capacity of Pensionary of Dordrecht was commissioned to replace him, wrote to him that if he did not speedily return his cause would be lost. His father, Jacob de Witt, alarmed at the dangers to which his departure exposed the government of the republic, speaks to him of his uneasiness in the private letter which he writes to him: 'Very dear son, I do not know what else to write to you, but that I fancy I see from afar that the cows are in the clover. The old woman' (it was thus he spoke of the Princess-Dowager) 'has stopped the advance of the Luneburg troops, by means of her son-in-law, the Elector of Brandenburg. Overyssel and Zealand are taking hostile measures against us. Amsterdam and some other towns are beginning to totter. Your brother is at Groningen, and I hear nothing of his coming. I imagine they will try their utmost to prevent your return here. Come, in order to see to all this, and to insure success.'

It was against the Grand Pensionary that all blows were levelled, in the hopes of thus precipitating a change of the republican government, which did not seem likely to survive his fall. One of his most constant correspondents, Colonel Bampfield, gave him notice almost daily of the incessantly renewed attacks of his enemies. 'In the towns and public places,' writes D'Estrades, 'they spoke of him as a traitor.' Such licence was given to hatred and calumny, that the incorruptible guardian of his country's liberty was exhibited in the light of a public enemy. This was but a prelude to the attempts to which, seven years later, John de Witt was to become a victim.

The manifestations made on all sides in favour of the Prince of Orange, seemed to denote an approaching restoration. At Rotterdam over 4,000 of the inhabitants went out to meet and greet him on his arrival, and the magistrates were nearly going out in a body to receive him with the honours that belonged of right to the former Stadtholders. Ruyter, whose fidelity to the States was above suspicion,

eagerly welcomed the young Prince on his visit to the fleet, under the escort and superintendence of the Grand Pensionary, and thanked him for the encouragement which his presence gave the crews, telling him that it had enabled him to enlist more than 1,000 men. The festivities given by the corporation at the Hague, in the quarter where the Prince resided, gave the townspeople an opportunity of showing the attachment they felt towards him. He had come, in company with John de Witt, to take part in the rejoicings, and after having assisted at a banquet which was protracted for three days, and to which he himself contributed some of the dishes served, he was unanimously elected president of the association. He held an actual court, although without the exercise of any authority. 'Every day,' writes the French ambassador, 'numbers of persons, amongst others the officers in garrison at the Hague, dine with him and escort him when he goes out driving.' He resumed his part of pretender, and it did not seem that he would have long to wait for the inheritance of his ancestors.

Although he was only sixteen years of age, his partisans were anxious to obtain for him the office of captain-general, or at least that of general of the cavalry, which post was also vacant. They demanded also his admittance to the Council of State, which would give him the opportunity of acquiring some knowledge of military matters.

The people of Zealand, who, according to a contemporary, had remained not only ardent, but rabid, in his cause, made it a point of honour to obtain this satisfaction for him, and with this view the States of the Province, returning to an offensive policy, sent a deputation of twenty-eight members to the Hague, who were to threaten a dissolution of the union if the Prince's preferment was refused.

'If we put his foot in the stirrup for him,' they said, 'we shall soon manage to get him into the saddle.'

The Grand Pensionary had not allowed himself to be surprised or depressed. On his return from the fleet he soon restored the assembly of Holland to its usual harmony, and made good use of the proceedings of the French ambassador, who,

to gain the confidence of the States and win them back to the French Alliance, was exerting himself in the town council in favour of the election of magistrates who were opposed to a change of government. Count d'Estrades feared that any appointments made in the interests of the Prince of Orange might serve to reconcile the United Provinces to England; and he undertook, for the purpose of opposing them, a tour of the provinces, of which he perhaps exaggerated the success with too much complacency. 'I invited all the deputies of Holland, nearly four hundred in number, to dinner, one after the other,' he writes, 'M. de Witt does the same, and we act in concert to win back those who are wavering.'

Their energetic co-operation gave the victory to the policy of the Grand Pensionary. In spite of the opposition of three of the provinces, he managed to get his own candidate, Conrad Burg, who had represented the republic in Russia, and was a sheriff in the municipal council of Amsterdam, appointed to succeed Beverningh as treasurer-general of the United Provinces. On the other hand, he persuaded the States to set aside the claim of the Elector of Brandenburg, who appeared to be putting a price upon his alliance by demanding beforehand satisfaction for his nephew. 'The deputies of Holland,' he writes, 'have represented to the States-General that it was not seemly that a foreign prince should publicly interfere in a purely domestic affair, in which all the other provinces concur, so that the president has been requested to remonstrate with the ministers of Brandenburg, who have withdrawn the memorial.' According to Count d'Estrades, the Grand Pensionary remained master of the conduct of the government.

Still, the resistance was insufficient to avert the danger which was constantly threatening. The fresh campaign entered upon by the States of Zealand in favour of the Prince of Orange might prove the signal for internal dissensions, aggravated by a foreign war. A compromise would be needed to disarm the Orange party, and De Witt recognised the necessity for this. 'The intrigues carried on here,' he writes, 'will certainly place Holland in a disastrous predicament if

they are not forestalled by some compromise.' He preferred, therefore, to allow with a good grace what he could not prevent.

With this idea he had already made an overture of conciliation calculated at the same time to strengthen the alliance with France. He had proposed the appointment of the Prince of Orange to the command of the cavalry, on the condition that Marshal Turenne should be made commander-in-chief. 'The councillor deputies,' he writes, 'are of opinion that it is necessary to find a brave and skilful general belonging to the Reformed religion, of a rank sufficient to place him above the other generals who are in the service of the State, without giving them cause for offence; and whose interests are such that the chief allies of the republic can place confidence in him. If one could know M. de Turenne's wishes it would be easy to turn the scale in his favour.'

Turenne was worthy of this preference. His military fame and his religious faith were not his only titles to the selection of the States-General. He had passed his apprenticeship in arms, under the command of the Stadtholders Maurice and Frederick Henry, in the war with Spain, and as a grandson by his mother's side of William I. his kinship was a further reason for confiding in him.

Nevertheless, the Grand Pensionary's measures were not as successful as he had expected. He could not bring the King of France round to his views, as Louis feared that so much military power in the hands of the Prince of Orange, even under the command of Turenne, would give him too great influence with the army and allow him to put it at the disposal of the King of England. De Witt was therefore obliged to abandon his project, although without giving up a hope of attaining by some other means the end he had in view.

The deliberations of the States of Holland on the proposal which had been made to them by the States of Zealand, to throw open the road to power to the young Prince of Orange, suggested to him a new line of conduct. The nobles and deputies of six of the towns had declared that if the education of William II.'s son was confided to the States of Holland by

his grandmother, the Princess-Dowager, the deputies of Holland ought to accept the proposal. The Grand Pensionary had tried to get this arranged immediately after the King of England's restoration, but Charles II.'s ill-will foiled him. It was nevertheless a project worthy of a great statesman, and De Witt returned to it with confidence. He looked upon it as destined to end the evil era of civil discord. He liked to imagine that an aspirant brought up under the care and patronage of the guardians of the constitution would be content with being the chief citizen of a republic, and thought it the best means that could be taken to insure him against any ambition of becoming its master.

There was no longer any fear that the King of England would try and dispute his nephew's education with him, by imposing his guardianship on the States; the war in which Charles II. was engaged with the United Provinces deterred him from this. The Grand Pensionary was moreover guaranteed against his hostility by the protection of the King of France, and to secure it affected to have no wish but that of following Count d'Estrades' advice, being skilful enough to seem to yield to the course he was himself disposed to follow. He had thus only the opposition of the Orange party to overcome, which, carried away by the fervour of its hopes, wished to keep all and give nothing.

To overcome this difficulty De Witt sought the concurrence of the Princess-Dowager, who was impatient to come forward and did not bear inaction with equanimity. She was the more anxious to come to terms with the Grand Pensionary that she knew how important it was to the Prince of Orange to obtain the assistance he needed to open to him the road to power on his quitting private life. Independently of the vanity which influenced her, she had sufficient perception to have shown herself favourable to an understanding with the leaders of the republican party had they consented to burden themselves with the interests of the House of Orange, which the Orange party was powerless to advance. De Witt eagerly profited by this unexpected alliance. At his request the French ambassador, with whom he was desirous to act in

concert to insure the success of his projects, made the first overtures to the Princess-Dowager, which she received with suspicion. He did not hesitate then to go to her himself, and easily convinced her of his sincerity. He undertook to make the States of Holland the guardians of the young Prince if she would consent to ask them for their protection in favour of her grandson.

Such an offer was too tempting to be refused. According to a contemporary (the Count de Guiche) the Princess-Dowager was dazzled, and followed the example of those in whom long abstinence has so awakened appetite that, instead of giving themselves time to make a good meal, they satiate themselves with the first food that comes in their way.

Following the advice of John de Witt, she sent the deputies of Holland a memorial that had been suggested to her by the Grand Pensionary, in which she asked them to undertake the education of the young Prince of Orange. She had made up her mind, as the Grand Pensionary had given her reason to hope, that the States of Holland, after having taken her grandson under their protection, would give him the pension of 100,000 francs which had been promised to him, and would not long defer his admittance into the Council of State. The deputies, who were prepared for this demand, consented without hesitation, on the recommendation of John de Witt, and the more readily that they could thus set aside the importunate demands of the States of Zealand and enjoy, so to speak, their confusion.

Two days later they elected the members of the commission for the education of the young Prince, giving them full powers. They re-elected those who had formed part of the commission which six years before had already been formed for the guardianship of William II.'s son, according to the agreement which De Witt had entered into with his mother, and which had not survived the death of that princess.

Noortwijck, one of the deputies of the nobility, who was devoted to the States Government, and Nanning Forest, auditor of the domain accounts, returned to their original functions.

The two other commissioners, Beveren de Barendrecht and Cornelius Graeff de Zuydpolsbroek, were dead, and it was necessary to replace them. In spite of the opposition of the deputies of Leyden and Haarlem the States appointed as their successors Adrien de Blyenbourg, lord of Naldwijck, a member of the Council of Dordrecht, and Dalkenier, burgomaster of Amsterdam. The chief authority rested, however, with the Grand Pensionary; and the First Minister of a republic thus found himself charged with a prince's education.

De Witt had many obstacles to overcome in order to conform it to his views and hopes. The son of William II. was sixteen and had to be taken into account. 'My master is no longer a child, thank God,' wrote Huyghens de Zuylichem, the private secretary of the late Stadtholder, to Lionne; 'I see with astonishment how he has grown in these few years, and thriven in mind and body.' Accustomed to look upon the States of Holland as usurpers, the Prince of Orange had opposed the overtures made to them by his grandmother, and in spite of the representations of the Count de Guiche, who had some influence with him, he had refused to take any part in the request she had made to them.

It was important that his ill-will should not be encouraged by those who surrounded him. Not satisfied with deterring him from a reconciliation with the republican party, his advisers spared no pains to confound his interests with those of the King of England, his uncle, and thus seemed to render themselves accomplices in the war declared by Charles II. against the republic of the United Provinces. De Witt, therefore, took the most energetic measures to withdraw the young Prince from his surroundings. 'There will be no promotion for the Prince of Orange,' he writes, 'with the consent of the States, until he shall have been detached from those who are, with reason, called the partisans of England, and who are conspiring to give King Charles II. the sovereignty of Holland, in the name of his sister's son.' These imputations were justified. The young Prince's court was that of an English prince. His two gentlemen, Bromley, and Heenvliet, a son of the Princess Royal's former confidential agent, were both

Englishmen. His steward or master of the household, Boreel, the son of the ambassador of the United Provinces in France, had become a naturalised subject of Great Britain. His governor was his natural uncle, Frederick of Nassau Zulestein, whose wife, an Englishwoman, had the upper hand of her husband, and acquired great authority over the young Prince. Zulestein was in such close communication with the English court that, at the commencement of the war, the Duke of York wrote to him announcing the arrival of the enemy's fleet on the shores of Holland, and the Grand Pensionary had reason therefore to mistrust the confidence placed in him by the Prince of Orange. To get him out of the way he induced the States of Holland to appoint a new governor for their ward. The Princess-Dowager, having always been inimical to Zulestein, who had been acknowledged by her husband the Stadtholder Frederick Henry as his natural son, hastened to express her approval of this change. But the Prince of Orange, who looked upon this separation as a great sacrifice, shrank from no efforts to retain his governor. He went to the French ambassador and begged him, with tears in his eyes, to use his influence with the Grand Pensionary to spare him so great a sorrow, promising to look upon M. de Witt as a father and to conduct himself as a true child of the State, if only his request was acceded to. He was so ill with grief that he would not leave his room or even his bed. It was in vain that he added threats to entreaties, declaring 'that it was a mistake to continue to treat him as a child, that he was no longer one, and that he would soon let them know it.' De Witt remained inflexible. Zulestein obtained, it is true, as compensation, a continuance of his salary of 4,000 florins for five years, but he was none the less removed from his pupil.

The States of Holland chose as his successor John van Ghent, deputy for Guelders in the States-General, who had always favoured the existing government, and had been one of the extraordinary embassy sent to France some years previously, to conclude the last treaty of alliance.

The appointment of the new governor was specially calculated to please Louis XIV. by reassuring him as to any fear

of a union of the Orange party with England. To lay Van Ghent under an obligation to him the King of France commissioned his ambassador to offer him secretly an annuity of 4,000 francs.

The Prince of Orange made a last attempt to prevent the States from forcing their choice upon him. He begged Van Ghent to refuse the post offered to him, promising to take into account his refusal, and to see to his future welfare and to that of his children. But Van Ghent, not wishing to break with the States, preferred to brave a displeasure from which he had nothing to fear for the moment, and did not hesitate to take possession of his office.

The Prince of Orange had only to submit. He resigned himself in silence to the affront which had been put upon him, and hid his grief until the time came when he could obtain reparation. He only showed his resentment to his grandmother, whom he could not forgive for having, even in his own interests, made common cause with the enemies of the House of Orange. Wishing to revenge himself upon her for her behaviour, he urged his new guardians to settle his accounts, which were in great confusion, for which he declared the Princess-Dowager was responsible; 'complaining that his land was always being sold under its value, that none of his debts were paid, and that accounts were owing to his tradespeople of years' standing.' At the same time assuming a reserve and habit of dissimulation beyond his years, he recognised the necessity of satisfying the States of Holland by an appearance of submissiveness until he should be emancipated. He had apparently no other thought than that of gaining their approval, and affected so much warmth towards them that his grandmother took offence. He answered her reproaches with firmness, representing to her 'that she had only herself to thank if he looked upon them as those upon whom his future depended.' 'I left him,' writes the French ambassador, 'ready to do anything which M. de Witt might advise.'

De Witt fulfilled the duties which his new office imposed upon him towards the Prince with exemplary fidelity. The attachment and solicitude he showed towards him are testified

to by all contemporary writers. To win his confidence he even took part in his games. Count d'Estrades relates that 'he was challenged to a game of tennis by the Grand Pensionary and the Prince of Orange, whom he had gone to see at play together.' 'I took them at their word,' he adds, 'and without taking off my coat played six games, which I won.' John de Witt's vigilant care over the education confided to him was never at fault. The Princess-Dowager having asked that her grandson might be present at a marriage in the family, he answered: 'The committee of education refer this decision to your Highness, only begging you not to allow the Prince's absence to be prolonged to the prejudice of the useful employment of his time.' He had himself undertaken the direction of his studies, with the assistance of the young Prince's tutor, Bornius. He regularly examined him on the work of the week, and further reserved at least an hour every Monday for instructing him in politics.

He, no doubt, counted upon these lessons to teach him, if not to love the States, at any rate to respect their authority, and to encourage him to follow the example of his ancestor, William I., rather than that of his father. A room in the prince's palace, called the *chamber of education*, was used for these conversations, by which, through a strange reverse of fortune, the son of the Stadtholder William II.'s prisoner prepared the last descendant of the House of Orange to make himself worthy of the power of his ancestors. 'I am anxious to make the Prince of Orange's education a complete work,' says the Grand Pensionary with a patriotic disinterestedness which does him honour; 'my party may fall, and it is necessary that this young man should some day be qualified to govern the republic.'

By taking the Prince of Orange under their protection, the States of Holland gave him the opportunity of justifying in the future the foresight of John de Witt. When they resolved to undertake the charge of his education, one of the principal members of the States-General said, laughingly: 'Holland thinks it can make the Prince a child of the State, but I think she will be rather the Prince's child.' The partisans of

William II.'s son had, moreover, never ceased to count on time as their best ally, in re-establishing his fortunes. 'When his Highness shall be a few years older,' they wrote, 'the provinces will pull down all this scaffolding. The time will come. The work is begun, and will go on of itself without troubling anyone. The Prince, once of age, will undo all that has been done during his minority.'

He had no need to wait for his majority to profit by the events which conspired in his favour. The restitution of the Principality of Orange, which the King of France had taken possession of some years previously, had already restored his credit abroad. Louis XIV. had for a long time refused to give it up, in spite of the urgent entreaties and supplications of Huyghens de Zuylichem, whom the Princess-Dowager had sent to Paris to support her claims. He eventually gave way, to please the Elector of Brandenburg, the Princess's son-in-law, whose neutrality he was interested in securing for the execution of his plans on the Spanish Netherlands. Moreover, the peace which had just been concluded with the King of England at Breda, seemed to impose upon the States of Holland the necessity of concessions in favour of Charles II. with a view to conciliating the republic's new ally. Finally Louis's invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, by placing the States-General in jeopardy of a war with France, made it impossible for them to leave any of their military commands vacant, thus favouring the impatience of those who wished to reserve to the descendant of the former stadtholders the supreme command of the army and navy, which had belonged to his ancestors.

De Witt had been long prepared for this event, which he considered inevitable. 'The magistrates and the people are so determined in favour of the young Prince,' he had written six years previously, 'that as soon as he has reached a suitable age, the command of the troops will fall into his hands.' But on the other hand, being enlightened by the events of 1650, and the recollection of William II.'s coup d'état, he was convinced that in allowing the powers of the Stadtholder to be united to those of captain- and admiral-general, 'he should

make the Prince of Orange no longer the officer, but the sovereign of the State.' To separate the two offices and make them incompatible with one another was the programme proposed by De Witt, to insure the duration of the republican government. He flattered himself that he could soon put it into execution, by arranging for the admission of the young Prince into the Council of State and his appointment as captain- and admiral-general, in consideration of his renunciation of the stadtholdership. 'We ought,' he wrote to one of his confidants, 'on the one hand firmly to secure public liberty, and on the other to grant to the Prince of Orange at once a position suitable to his age, which does not at present allow of his being raised to any higher rank.' By following this line of conduct, De Witt sought not merely a momentary expedient, but a solution of the difficulty which might insure security in the future.

The proposal he had in view, and to which the negotiations with the Prince of Orange were a prelude, had been considered in the first place by the councillor deputies, and submitted in their name to the States of Holland. By it they were asked to come to an agreement with the other provinces for the disposal of the higher posts in the army, leaving open that of captain-general, which seemed thus to be reserved for the Prince of Orange. To prove their intentions in regard to this, they were asked to guarantee his admission into the Council of State, and his appointment as commissioner to the army of the States in the event of war, that he might thus be prepared for the exercise of military authority. But they were only to be called upon to fulfil this engagement after obtaining a preliminary guarantee from the States-General that whoever should be stadtholder—that is, governor—of one of the provinces of the confederation, should be considered ineligible for the post of captain- and admiral-general.

These resolutions were sent for deliberation to the town councils, and communicated to the States-General. They did not seem likely to give rise to any serious debate. It was rather the interest of the Orange party to be content with the offers of the States of Holland. It was not suffi-

ciently united to be exacting. Besides, the States of Zealand had never forgiven the Princess-Dowager for having forsaken them. They accused her of deceiving them, by becoming reconciled without their knowledge to the new holders of power, and of showing preference to the States of Holland. They declared that, having been thus set aside, they gave up any further steps on behalf of the young Prince, and accordingly, having in vain tried to obtain some part in the direction of his education, they now held themselves aloof. In short, the most devoted of the Prince of Orange's partisans attached themselves without scruple to the new government. Count Sommeldsdyck, one of the principal nobles of Holland, whose father had been employed by the late Stadtholder in carrying out his coup d'état, wrote to De Witt: 'I hope to obtain the honour of your friendship, and I desire still more to give you the assurance of mine, in all constancy and fidelity, in the interest of the established government, which I promise you now and always to consider before my own. If my late father acted otherwise, no doubt he had his reasons as I now have mine; and so the world goes round.' De Witt had, therefore, good cause to express his satisfaction to one of his confidants in these terms: 'The power and influence of Holland are so much greater than those of the other provinces, that in regard to them their Noble and Great Mightinesses can, with good management, accomplish anything on which they may determine with good reason and upon a sound basis.'

The States of Holland, moreover, were careful not to abuse their advantage. They contented themselves with suggesting an agreement, by proposing the separation of the two offices of stadtholder and captain-general, and made no pretension to dispense with the co-operation of the other provinces. But, with some of their deputies, feeling took the place of prudence and gave the upper hand to an aggressive policy, which soon set the two parties at variance. Whilst De Witt inclined to moderation and patience, two of the deputies for Amsterdam, Fagel and Valkenier, went far beyond the initiative of the Grand Pensionary. In the impulsive ardour of their ambition, they desired to stand foremost amongst the most

violent enemies of the House of Orange, of which they were to become, a few years later, the fiercest partisans. The Grand Pensionary stood out in vain for two days against the proposal which they laid before him, and ended by giving a reluctant consent.

A fresh resolution adopted by the States of Holland led them into a path at the entrance of which they had hitherto paused. They declared at first that they would not consent to the appointment of a captain- and admiral-general until the States-General had made such an office incompatible with that of stadtholder. This declaration not seeming to them sufficient, they also decided to abolish the stadtholdership in their province and to put it out of their power to restore it. In consequence of this suppression the powers which had hitherto belonged to the stadtholders, and which had remained in abeyance, were definitively redistributed between the States, the nobles, and the magistrates of the towns. By a subsequent regulation, the States and the nobles settled of what offices each should have the disposal. The States also brought under their own jurisdiction all differences in the towns, either between themselves or with the courts of law. The magistrates of the towns, on their side, claimed the appointment of all the members of their councils as well as the choice of their burgomasters and sheriffs. As a guarantee of the stability of this constitution of the republican government, an oath was imposed upon the Grand Pensionary, upon the members of the Assembly, and upon all who formed or might hereafter form part of the body of nobles or of the magistrates. The formula was thus conceived: 'I promise and declare that I will faithfully uphold the above-mentioned edict in all its clauses and articles, and that I will never permit it to be violated or derogated from. Moreover, I will not only never make any proposal which shall be opposed to it, but I will never offer any advice tending to prevent its accomplishment, or to bring its validity into question. So help me God Almighty!'

No opposition was offered by the Assembly of the Province. The Grand Pensionary had long before insured himself the

co-operation of the nobility, by granting to those amongst them who represented their order in the States, hereditary privileges, not only for their sons, but in default of sons for their next brother. The deputies of the towns on their side could not but agree with the opinion of the magistrates in favour of the definite abolition of the stadtholdership, which assured them for ever the free election of their municipal magistrates. The promise, moreover, of giving military power to the Prince of Orange seemed a sufficient satisfaction to his partisans. Some members made a few objections in regard merely to the oath. A few of the deputies of the nobles having asked for an adjournment before committing themselves irrevocably, the States resolved that the oath should not be required until the following session.

Four months later, when they met for the new session, the difficulties that had been raised were got over by a subterfuge. The meeting had been convoked for four o'clock in the afternoon, and all those members who were disposed to take the oath for the edict had been requested to be in the hall on the stroke of the hour. They did not fail to be there, and the sitting was precipitately declared open. The deputies of the nobles, who had remained at table, were alone too late. When they came to take their places, all the members who had been present at the opening of the sitting had already answered to their names, and taken the required oath. The nobles had no longer any right to speak, the voting having already begun, and, finding that they would be forced to retire if they should refuse to follow the example set them, they gave in with a good grace.

The next day the most energetic measures were taken to obtain at once pledges of allegiance and fidelity to the edict, which all the members of the town councils were required to subscribe. The States had at first determined to appoint three commissioners to receive the oath from the magistrates, but, fearing that those who wished to dispense with it might be tempted to escape it by absenting themselves, they thought of a better plan. They sent a copy of the edict to all the town councils, accompanied by a form of oath, which the

magistrates were called upon to sign. Their signature was to be appended within the three weeks preceding the new session of the States, a refusal being considered equivalent to resignation.

The right of sitting in the municipal assembly was thus made subject to the condition of an oath. This injunction was received with perfect docility. One magistrate alone, a member of the council of Edam, excused himself, saying that, being old and deaf, he would not sign what he did not understand. When the States resumed their sittings, the oath had been taken by all who had any part in the government of the Province. The edict was sent to the courts of justice, with orders that they should conform themselves to it, and remained in the care of the Grand Pensionary, who, being more bound than anyone else to see it observed as a law of the State, and to refuse to allow any change in it, was destined to die a victim to the oath by which he had sworn to remain faithful to it.

Thus was brought about the act which the States called the 'Perpetual Edict,' with a presumption which was not justified by after events, in spite of the measures which they had taken to render it irrevocable. It gave the most complete satisfaction to the republican party, and seemed to assure to them the definite possession of the government. Some of the deputies who had voted for it considered it as marking the first day of liberty to their province. By leaving no possible office open to William II.'s son but that of the command of the army, the States of Holland flattered themselves that they should be secure against any princely government, without showing injustice towards the descendant of the country's liberator. They thought that in preventing his accession to the stadtholdership by the suppression of that office they had completely freed themselves.

Still they would have acted more prudently if, instead of openly breaking with traditions which dated back to the first days of the independence of the republic, and attempting to suppress the stadtholdership, they had contented themselves with lessening its importance by reserving to themselves

such prerogatives as might render it dangerous to the liberty of the people. The Grand Pensionary, much as he was opposed to the re-establishment of the stadtholdership, thought it would be rather dangerous than advantageous to abolish it openly. He would have preferred to proclaim it incompatible with the command of the army and navy, if he could have obtained the consent of the States-General. But he allowed himself to be too easily persuaded into another course, and in not preventing the States of Holland from taking too great an advantage of their victory he paved the way for a reaction sooner or later.

Whilst the votes were being taken for the Perpetual Edict, his cousin Vivien, the Pensionary of Dordrecht, was cutting up the binding of a book with a penknife. 'What are you doing?' asked with some surprise John de Witt, who was sitting near him. 'I am trying,' replied Vivien, 'the effect of steel upon parchment,' thus meaning it to be understood that the resolutions of the States, although inscribed on their registers, would be at the mercy of a sword as soon as the Prince of Orange was in the possession of the military authority.

The other provinces, considering themselves provoked by the Perpetual Edict, would not submit to the challenge which had been thrown down to them. The States of Zealand required the States-General to reply to the vote of the States of Holland, by admitting the Prince of Orange to the Council of State, and by appointing him without delay to the command of the army and navy. They demanded moreover that the other provinces should enter into no agreement which should interdict them from naming him stadtholder. The States of Friesland and of Groningen, whose governor was the young Prince of Nassau, not wishing to make him ineligible in default of the Prince of Orange for the command of the army and navy, were disposed to follow the example of Zealand. They desired their representatives in the States-General to oppose henceforth any proposal destined to make the two charges incompatible.

The States of Guelders, although inclined on their side to a separation of the civil and military powers, would not consent

to such a condition being imposed beforehand on the other provinces, and declared moreover that they would come to no terms until a captain- and admiral-general had been appointed.

The States of Overyssel, being deterred from any decision by the divisions in their Assembly, were obliged to stand aloof.

The States of Utrecht alone conformed their conduct to that of the States of Holland. After having declared in a preliminary sitting that no commander of the army could act as stadtholder of their province, they decreed the suppression of that office. But the co-operation of the States of Utrecht was not sufficient to enable the States of Holland to dissolve the coalition with which they were threatened. The other provinces, wishing to force them to yield under pain of disorganising the army and compromising the defence of the country, declined to dispose of the military commands until the Prince of Orange had been unconditionally appointed captain- and admiral-general. The Grand Pensionary, strongly convinced of the necessity of coming to some agreement in regard to military affairs, did all he could to avert this danger by offering to make concessions. He made use of his influence with the members of the States-General, who formed part of the committee on military matters, and gained their approval of an important proposal which was put forward by one of them, Riperda tot Beurse, deputy for Guelders, under the name of the Project of Harmony. It was intended to smoothe away internal jealousies by offering guarantees favourable to the interests of the Prince of Orange. By the terms of this project it is true that no stadtholder of a province could be named captain- or admiral-general, but this incompatibility of the civil and military offices was only to be stipulated when the military appointment was made. The result was that the provinces remained at liberty to choose the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, if the command of the army and navy had not been given to him, and that they were not bound to enter into any preliminary agreement in order to obtain his admittance into the Council of State. Moreover, the post of captain- and admiral-general without being actually promised

was indirectly reserved to him, but the appointment was not to be made before he reached the age of twenty-two.

In default of the inheritance of his ancestors, which was not restored to him, the young Prince of Orange might now feel certain of enjoying some portion of the authority which had belonged to them, on the condition of waiting during the six years which would intervene before his majority.

The Grand Pensionary flattered himself that he had thus found a way of conciliating matters. 'I shall not fail,' he writes to the Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, 'to support this measure in the States of Holland.' He easily secured their assent, the deputies who were most opposed to the Prince of Orange's advancement having already pledged themselves, when they disposed of the commands of the army and navy, to appoint him captain- and admiral-general for life, instead of restricting themselves to a temporary appointment. By means of this concession, De Witt after some months' negotiation obtained the adhesion of the provinces of Guelders and Overyssel to the Project of Harmony. The States of Holland hastened to profit by it to urge the appointment of the superior officers of the army. Having skilfully given the other provinces an interest in the choice of the principal candidates by accepting those whom they presented, they went in a body to the States-General, and their energetic remonstrances, backed up by the members of the military commission of the federal assembly, had the success which they anticipated.

The army once reorganised, the States of Holland could wait in perfect security for the approval of the Project of Harmony by the three other provinces who still opposed it. By refusing to consent to it they could only injure the cause of the Prince of Orange, on whom they thus shut the entrance to the Council of State, as well as all chance of the command of the army and navy. But De Witt was too much interested in the success of the work of pacification which he had undertaken to leave it in suspense, and he caused all measures to be taken which might lead to the agreement of the dissenting provinces. The States of Holland persuaded the States-General to send two deputations to the provinces of Groningen

and Friesland, and to that of Zealand. The principal management of it was confided to Fagel and Vivien, two members of their Assembly who had given proofs of their zeal and fidelity. Fagel's speech to the States of Friesland, at Leuwarden, was an eloquent justification of De Witt's policy. He demonstrated the necessity of agreement between the Provinces, to be brought about by the help of reciprocal concessions, and laid stress upon the advances that had been made by the States of Holland, who, in the interests of the Prince of Orange, had consented that the appointment of captain- and admiral-general should be not merely temporary. He represented the danger of leaving the civil and military offices combined in the hands of one man, who would be exposed to the suggestions of flatterers and courtiers, and might be tempted by ambition of sovereign power. He wound up by pointing out that once it was decided that the office of captain- and admiral-general should devolve upon the last descendant of the House of Orange, a premature appointment would do more harm than good. According to him it could not fail to give the young Prince the impression that he owed the command of the army and navy to his birth rather than to the good-will of the States, whilst he might prepare himself to exercise it and be forced to make himself worthy of the position by filling at first the functions of a member of the Council of State. Intimidated by this energetic intervention, the States of Friesland and, following their example, the States of Groningen appeared to be rather for than against conciliation. Having moreover their own special stadtholder, the son of Count William Frederick of Nassau, they cared less about the preservation or re-establishment of the stadtholdership than did the other provinces, and had no interest in prolonging resistance.

It was more difficult to get the States of Zealand to agree. In vain the States of Holland asked that conferences might be held. They replied by recriminations to the report of their delegates, reminding them of the previous engagement by which the two provinces had promised to take no part in the nomination of a stadtholder without a preliminary agreement,

and complaining that these promises had been broken. The Project of Harmony had, however, prevented the negotiations being broken off, and De Witt hastened to renew them. 'I cannot imagine,' he writes to Peter de Huybert, the Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, 'why the States of this province will not give the consent they are asked for. I hope it is not because the proposal is made by Holland.'

To gain the good-will of Peter de Huybert, De Witt had promised to obtain for his son a vacant place in the council of Flanders, to which was confided the jurisdiction that had remained in common between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces. But the Councillor Pensionary of Zealand remained intractable. He opposed a violent manifesto to the conciliatory address of the deputies whom the States-General had just sent to the States of Zealand. Not content with declaring that Zealand would refuse to consent to the separation of the two offices of stadtholder and captain- and admiral-general, he blamed in unmeasured terms the policy followed by the States of Holland since the death of William II. had made them masters of the government. As if for the purpose of provoking them, he wound up by an attempt at justifying the coup d'état of 1650, thus encouraging fresh attempts against their authority. Such violence of tone did him more harm than good. The States of Zealand did, it is true, submit to the approval of their town-council the message proposed by their councillor pensionary, but the answer, equally moderate and conclusive, of the States of Holland deterred them from keeping up the controversy. The proceedings so skilfully conducted by De Witt's confidential agents had not moreover been without result. His emissaries succeeded in creating dissension in the resisting party, and ended by placing as rival authorities, in opposition to the Councillor Pensionary of Zealand, two of the principal members of the States of the Province, Thibault and Ingolsel, contriving to procure them the support of the towns of Middleburg and Flushing. 'The present condition of affairs in Zealand,' wrote Bampfield to De Witt, 'is much better than I could have hoped, when I began working with such care to bring them to the state they are now in.' 'It looks,' he wrote

at the same time to one of his correspondents at the French court, 'as if the opposition, which is already much weakened in Friesland, would eventually succumb in Zealand.'

The sentiments of the Prince of Orange seemed moreover the surest guarantee of agreement, and contributed largely to the success of the Grand Pensionary's policy.

Immediately after the passing of the Perpetual Edict, the States of Holland had sent a deputation to their ward, and had commissioned their First Minister to justify to him the resolution they had made. De Witt told him plainly that 'whilst there was not one single member of the assembly who did not look upon him as destined one day to command the armies of the State, neither was there one who did not detest the recollection of his father's enterprise.' He added that the suppression of the stadtholdership was intended to prevent the renewal of a similar attempt. The Grand Pensionary softened this communication by telling the young Prince, that the States of Holland, 'wishing to render him fitted to do good service to the republic,' would demand his admission into the Council of State, and he exhorted him to deserve their confidence, so that he might obtain the command of the army and of the fleet, as soon as he was of an age to exercise it. According to the despatch which reproduces this curious interview, William II.'s son was so great an adept in dissimulation that he not only withheld all useless lamentations, but further expressed his satisfaction and begged De Witt to thank the States of Holland for their consideration for his person and interests.

De Witt with the most loyal sincerity strove to persuade him of this. With this view he desired his special confidant, Colonel Bampfield, to transmit the most pressing offers for an agreement to Doctor Rumpf, the Princess-Dowager's physician, and one of the most esteemed advisers of the family of Orange. Bampfield, in accordance with the instructions given to him, entered into a correspondence with Rumpf, representing to him that the Prince's interests could only really be served by leaving them entirely in the hands of the Grand Pensionary of Holland, who, he writes, 'has both the capacity

and the will to give him useful and wise counsels, and has no less power than skill to procure the success of all that may be promised and undertaken in his favour.' 'In my opinion,' he adds, 'this great and good work, which will promote the advancement of the Prince, no less than his enjoyment of his allowance and the payment of his debts, ought to commence by mutual confidence given and received between his Highness and the Grand Pensionary, who I am sure for his part is very ready for it. It would, therefore, be advisable for his Highness to take the first and most convenient opportunity to see him and talk to him openly. His Highness will gain every advantage he can wish for, if he will only promise to engage in no cabals, but rather to do all he can to establish an agreement between the provinces and to follow the Grand Pensionary's advice.'

To give weight to these considerations, Bampfield represented 'how imprudent it would be in the young Prince to trust to promises from the other provinces which they could not keep if opposed by Holland;' and he asked 'that it might not be forgotten that if by the assistance of a lever a man can raise himself, on the other hand nothing can be drawn from nothing, as the Latin proverb says: *Ex nihilo nihil fit.*

The Grand Pensionary's declarations confirmed these assurances. They are frankly expressed in his intimate conversations with the English ambassador, in whom he confided without reserve. He assured him that he never failed to see the Prince once or twice a week, and that he now bore him a special affection, doing all justice to his good qualities. He promised to obtain for him the appointment of captain- and admiral-general as soon as he was of age to command the army and navy. Lastly, he justified his opposition to the union of the two offices of stadtholder and captain- and admiral- general, by representing that such considerable powers united in the same hands would threaten the liberty of the republic. 'He could not forget,' he said, 'that this liberty had only survived by a miracle, under the government of the Princes of Orange—at one time through foreign wars, at

another by the moderation of Frederick Henry, and again by the premature death of William II. He sketched in a few lines the plan of his policy, which was that of conformity to law, confessing that had he been born a subject of the King of Spain, he should not have advised his ancestors to decree the deposal of their sovereign, but declaring, on the other hand, 'that in his capacity as minister of the States he was bound to do all in his power to uphold their authority.'

Such was the end at which he had been aiming by his persevering efforts, and which he seemed now to have reached. In tempering the Perpetual Edict by the Project of Harmony—to which he felt certain he could soon obtain the consent of all the Provinces—he flattered himself that he could make acceptable, even to William of Orange, a transaction which strengthened the republican government, and secured to the States the services of William I.'s last descendant, thus completing by his home policy the success of his diplomatic negotiations.

The Perpetual Edict, which appeared to disarm the Orange party by no longer allowing the young Prince of Orange to be an aspirant to power, had been passed between the treaty of Breda, forced upon England by a bold attack, and the Triple Alliance, which made the States-General the arbiters of France and Spain.

The supremacy of the republican party, and the greatness of the republic, left nothing to be desired. They insured the perfect success of a policy which, within as without, seemed the glorification of the work undertaken by the Grand Pensionary of Holland.

John de Witt's domestic life had been till now no less fortunate than his career as a statesman. For thirteen long happy years he had tasted the joys of mutual love. His wife had, by the charm of her affection, mitigated the troubles and sorrows inseparable from the tenure of power; and by her companionship had heightened the enjoyment of the brightest days of the Grand Pensionary's public life. When the peace of Breda was celebrated with rejoicings,

she had mingled with the light-hearted crowd which danced before John de Witt's house, and in company with her noble husband had prolonged far into the night her part in the popular festivity. She took her share in the recompense, as she had done in the labour. The absence of her husband, when she was expecting her confinement, and he left her in charge of their young children to expose himself to the dangers of the war with England, had tested her courageous resignation.

When De Witt proceeded to the Texel to superintend the fitting out of the navy, her first letter manifested her anxiety. 'Sir, and worthy husband,' she writes, 'this is to ask you if you will kindly take the trouble to inform me if I can remain here free from uneasiness as to any invasion of the English, in the event of the destruction of our fleet or other misfortunes. I have been much disturbed. I should be glad to know whether you will return home with the commissioners after the departure of the fleet, as it is reported that those gentlemen will remain to await the battle and do further service. Others say even that you will sail with the fleet, so that I am very uneasy, and should like to have from you the true account, to reassure me. But you must really tell me the truth, and not deceive me. I await a line from your hand by return, hoping it will serve to quiet me. With which I commend you to the Divine Providence, and remain, with greetings, your humble and devoted wife.'

The following month, when De Witt thought his presence on board necessary to repair the disasters of the naval campaign, she writes to him again: 'I have received your letter, which was very pleasant to me, as it gave me news of your health. I hope you will not fail to answer me, for now that I am deprived of the sight of your dear face, it is a great comfort to see at least your handwriting. I am afraid you are having a great deal of trouble down there. I hope you will spare yourself as much as possible. I long for the time when you will return home, but I fear it is still far off.' 'My dear Papa,' writes at the same time his eldest daughter, nine years old, 'Mama is longing for Papa, and wishes he was back, and

so do we all. All our relations beg to be remembered to Papa, and we drink his health every day.' [1]

Some months later the loving solicitude of the wife shows itself in a growing anxiety. De Witt was on the high seas, on board Ruyter's vessel, in the presence of the enemy, and impatient to attack them. Wendela Bicker begs him to reassure her, praying 'that he will tell her the truth, and not put her off with trifles.' In another letter she speaks of her gratitude for God's blessings, and for the welfare of her husband. 'For myself,' she adds, 'it would be an unheard-of joy to see you again in good health, and I shall await the time with impatience. You expressed a desire to receive a letter from my hand, and I should not have failed you, but that I thought you knew that we are all in good health here. Your little son, who has had fever, is now perfectly recovered. As to myself and the other children and our friends, we are all well.' Although she seldom gives any place in her correspondence to public affairs —from which she always held aloof, contenting herself with giving news of the family—she tells her husband of the absurd rumours which are being spread about—'that he had fought with Admiral Ruyter, that he had been hung on the shore'—and adds proudly: 'You have no need to trouble yourself about them; when one does right, one can hold up one's head with tranquillity. Now,' she winds up, 'my heart wishes you and the whole fleet a good voyage and a happy return, for which I pray God, who best knows what is good.' The following year, the Grand Pensionary, having again been obliged to leave her, to settle the differences which had arisen between the officers of the fleet, she gently laments this, promising him 'to overcome the intense wish she had for his return.' 'I consider myself fortunate,' she tells him, 'to have a husband who places the service of his country before his private affairs, and I have good reason to be satisfied. I will try, therefore, to be calm under all circumstances, and learn to imitate you more and more.'

[1] The letters of the girl to her father (Archives of the Kingdom, and Collection of Hœufft van Velsen) are written in fluent French, in childish style and spelling, and are addressed, 'Monsieur, Monsieur mon Papa.'

De Witt had too masculine a mind ever to feel the weakness of conjugal affection to which his wife sometimes gave way, and he constantly encourages her to resist it. 'I learnt with pleasure,' he writes to her, during his naval expedition, 'your resolution to receive with submission from the hand of God all that His Divine Majesty may send us. I pray God to strengthen you in this more and more. You must thank Him for the favour He has shown us on this occasion, I being as strong and full of courage as I have ever been in my life under any circumstances; and sleeping at night, as usual, without waking. I hope it will be the same with you, as soon as the first novelty has worn off. Let us not in any way resist whatever stroke may menace us, but confide ourselves in God, and receive with cheerfulness anything it may please Him to send us. You need be under no anxiety about me, as you may be certain that all will go well with me in life as in death, and in the latter case infinitely better than in the former.' It was as the cry of a soul, already detached by the fatigues of the struggle from all earthly desires; but he hastened to suppress it, and, affection again coming uppermost, the husband and father reappears in the statesman. After having declared himself ready to die without regrets, he hastens to add: 'Do not fear, however, that I shall neglect to take all reasonable precautions to preserve my life for my country and for my dear family. Praying Almighty God that He will give you confidence and animate you with His Spirit, I conclude, and remain your humble servant and faithful husband.'

Thirteen years of happy married life had brought him eight children, two of whom had died in infancy, and the youngest, Jacob, his grandfather's godson, was only a few months old. The fortune which he used with such moderation had filled up the measure of happiness of his married life. The inheritance he received from his mother-in-law, in addition to his wife's portion, is valued in a family inventory at 178,174 florins. He profited by this to add to his property the important domain of Heckendorp, which he acquired by purchase from Count de Mérode, one of the nobles of the

Province of Holland. Through the agency of his brother-in-law, Deutz, with whom he kept up a close correspondence, his patrimony was increased by many advantageous investments, and at his death he left to his children a property raised by irreproachable transactions to 492,660 florins. The new house which he had occupied for the last six years, spacious though simple in appearance, stood him in a rent of 250 florins. A few trees sheltered it in front, and the garden, which extended from the back of the dwelling, was joined by a bridge to that which adorned the beautiful residence of Prince John Maurice of Nassau. The Grand Pensionary had thus become a neighbour of the Prince of Orange, who had continued to reside in the former palace of his father, where the States held their sittings, and thenceforth he formed a member of the same ward, paying an entrance fee of forty florins. It was in their capacity as ward members that the son of the late Stadtholder and the Prime Minister of Holland, in accordance with the habits of the burgher society of their country, met at the solemn dinners of the corporation, at which John de Witt was present with his wife.

This quiet home life was too soon broken up, and John de Witt's domestic happiness darkened by the sorrows of premature widowerhood. Wendela Bicker, weakened in health and but ill-recovered from the birth of her last child, had lately lost her youngest daughter, at the age of two years. She was separated from her other daughters, Anna, Maria, and Agneta, who were under medical treatment at Oirschot near Bois-le-Duc, with the celebrated physician, Arnold Fey, who had been two years previously summoned to France by Louis XIV. to his mother, Anne of Austria. John de Witt had just taken her to visit her family at Amsterdam, and she was preparing to go with him to the country house of one of her sisters, when she was suddenly attacked with an indisposition, which altered her plans and caused her to return to the Hague. Her illness increased so rapidly that a couple of days later she desired to have her children brought back to her. John de Witt sent one of his clerks, Bacherus, in all haste to fetch them, begging the doctor in whose charge they were to give

instructions in writing for the cure of his third daughter Agneta; and in the following letter addressed to his eldest daughter desired them to return at once: 'Your dear mother, whose illness continues, has expressed herself anxious to have you and your sisters with her. I commend you to the care of God, remaining, my dear daughters, your affectionate father.'

They arrived too late to see her again. The day after their father had sent for them, their mother died, aged only thirty-two years. Five days later the two bereaved families assembled for the funeral, and the coffin of Wendela Bicker took its place in the vault of the new church, to be followed only four years later by that of the Grand Pensionary. 'Sir,' writes to him in French the English ambassador, Sir William Temple—who had become his friend since they had negotiated together the Triple Alliance—'having shared so largely in your joys, and in the applause which the world so justly bestowed upon you, it is only reasonable that I should take part in your losses, and tell with equal sorrow and truth how I feel the last one which has befallen you. I had remarked how your home always brought you relaxation from the fatigues of public life, and that instead of the diversion so often sought in vice or extravagance, you have always found yours in the innocent converse of conjugal and parental affection. I also noticed how happily you had given over all household cares to a lady who now only lives in the remembrance and esteem of all who knew her, and I know but too well by that how terribly this loss must affect you, and that there is neither justice nor kindness in trying as yet to offer you consolation. I will therefore only say that, had it not been for this sad occasion, you would have missed the greatest opportunity of showing that strength of mind which is sometimes more easily overcome by the calamities of home and private life than by those of government or of war—for these latter harden one daily, whilst the others are infinitely softening. I beg you therefore not to neglect this opportunity of adding to your fame, and not to allow your regrets to make you forget that you have long been wedded to the cause of your country an of Christendom, and that to them you owe all your care and

affection.' Such was the funeral oration of a departed happiness pronounced by one who had been its favoured witness.

The letters of condolence, piously preserved by John de Witt amongst his correspondence, were many. Friends of the family, political friends such as Beverningh and De Groot, the principal personages of the State, Prince John Maurice of Nassau, Ruyter—who was strongly attached to De Witt—the widow of Major-General Brederode, elder sister of the Princess-Dowager, the ambassadors and the foreign ministers—amongst others Baron Pelnitz, envoy extraordinary from the Elector of Brandenburg, Count d'Estrades and Lionne, all condoled with the Grand Pensionary in his affliction.

He struggled to overcome it, giving heed to the religious consolations offered to him, and to the exhortations of those who urged him to summon to his aid his force of character and strength of mind. 'Sir,' he answers Lionne, 'although I have to thank God for having taught me, from my youth up, to bend my will to His, and not to increase my misfortune by useless regrets and wishes in opposition to Him, I cannot but confess that, in the domestic affliction with which it has pleased Him to visit me, I feel with profound satisfaction the helping hand with which my friends support me and endeavour to prevent my stumbling.' But he was none the less overwhelmed with the blow which struck him in carrying off 'her who was truly a half of himself.'

'You know,' he writes to Madame de Brederode, 'how intense are sufferings of this nature, and you have learned to pity those whom they overtake.' Nothing can be more heart-rending than the melancholy expression of his sorrow to which he gives way in a letter to Temple: 'You know,' he says, 'the greatness of my sorrow, since you know how great is the inestimable loss which I have suffered. I have tried to turn my thoughts to occupations capable of diverting them from an object which was formerly my highest joy, and is now my deepest sorrow; but I find that business only numbs the pain and does not cure it. If there were any remedy capable of closing the wound, it would no doubt come from the gentle and healing hand which you lay on it. I feel it, I confess, because

it probes the wound; but it follows it up with a balm which soothes and alleviates the pain. I receive it as I ought, and will try to profit by your consolations, and to struggle against my weakness by the aid of those reasons which are dictated to you not only by that Christian philosophy which you profess, but also by the faithful friendship with which it pleases you to honour me.'

The final gratifications which he was to receive in public life could not restore to him the happiness he had lost. Still he could not forget, as Temple had reminded him, that he had espoused the cause of his country. The States of Holland obliged him to retain his functions, and once more renewed the expression of their confidence. They could not dispense with the direction of the Grand Pensionary in foreign affairs just after the conclusion of the Triple Alliance, which was his work, and would not therefore accept the resignation which he urgently pressed upon them. His five years of office having expired, De Witt, according to custom, offered 'his apologies for any mistakes he might involuntarily have made,' and begged them 'to give him credit for good intentions.' The States answered by a vote of thanks to him for his conduct. They declared that they considered him to have deserved well of the republic and of the province of Holland, and the Grand Pensionary having left the Hall of Assembly whilst they were deliberating, they recalled him to make known to him their resolution, which was his best recompense. It seemed insufficient, however, to them. After having at the same sitting desired the commissioners who had drawn up his former instructions to prepare those which were to regulate the exercise of his fresh powers, they ordered the councillor deputies to let them know what special services they owed to him, that they might take steps to remunerate them.

A week later, July 27, 1668, John de Witt was unanimously re-elected Grand Pensionary, and on August 3 the States voted him a large sum as a testimony of their gratitude. For the last fifteen years he had only received as Grand Pensionary a salary of 3,000 florins, to which had been added during the last eight years the emoluments of the two offices of Lieutenant of Fiefs

and Keeper of the Seals of the Province, which brought him in another 3,000 florins. He had, no doubt, at his disposal a sufficiently large amount of secret-service money, which he himself valued at 40,000 florins a year, for the payment of his diplomatic correspondence and private sources of information; but this and more he employed in the payment of special secretaries charged with drawing up or copying confidential despatches, never hesitating at any outlay to obtain information which might be of service to the interests of the republic. He thus offered, in his first year of office, as much as 300 florins to find out what were the instructions given to the French ambassador, Chanut. He always paid the carriage of his own letters, whereas the Grand Pensionary Barneveldt had yearly charged 500 florins on this account. He only repaid himself for the cost of copying, which he had reduced from four to three sous a page. He even defrayed his clerks' expenses for warming and lighting. He paid his own house rent, and would not give his consent to a plan for building a house which would have served as a residence for his successors. 'Although his possessions are but moderate,' writes one of the French ambassadors, 'he does not seem anxious to add to them.' John de Witt's pride was to uphold the traditions of proud disinterestedness bequeathed by the noblest citizens of Rome and Athens to the great servants of free countries.

The States of Holland felt themselves humiliated by the inadequate pecuniary position of their Prime Minister. They would not consent to his being less well remunerated than their Receiver-General, to whom they paid 5,000 florins besides an allowance for house rent. They doubled his salary, making it up to 6,000 florins, in addition to his income from his other two offices, and did not stop at this liberality. They desired that De Witt should profit by it retrospectively dating from the time of his first entry into office, and upon a report of the councillor deputies enumerating all his services, allocated him a sum of 45,000 florins. This gratuity, calculated upon the basis of the last fifteen years of his ministry, corresponded to a supplementary salary of

3,000 florins a year, thus making his salary in the past equal to the 6,000 florins he was henceforth to receive. The nobles, whom he had served gratuitously as their pensionary in the Assembly of the States, were anxious on their side to show no less generosity. They again offered him the remuneration he had hitherto refused, and had recourse at last to the intervention of the States to force him to receive a donation of 15,000 florins. He received State inscriptions in payment of these various amounts. The States, as a final testimony of their satisfaction, renewed the Act of Indemnity, with a promise of a seat in one of the courts of justice when he should resign his office. The following month, after having obtained the customary authorisation from the Council of Dordrecht, of which he was still a member, John de Witt accepted that fourth nomination as Grand Pensionary which was to cost him his life.

Far from seeking the pecuniary benefits thus liberally bestowed upon him, he had urged his friends to restrict the amount. He appealed to the deputies of Dordrecht to reduce the sum of 100,000 florins, which they wished him to accept, to 45,000 florins, and the States, out of consideration for his scruples, did not follow up the proposal of the deputies of Amsterdam, made through one of their deputies, Valkenier, to raise his salary to 8,000 florins. Money payments in recompense of services rendered in dealing with public affairs as though they were his own, had always appeared to him superfluous. He had not spared himself in the task. An indefatigable worker, he had so multiplied his correspondence in the direction of home affairs and foreign negotiations, that the registers of his fifteen years of ministry comprise 22,191 pages, whilst those of the Grand Pensionaries who had preceded him from the time of Barneveldt scarcely exceeded that number during a period of sixty-seven years. The reports of the commissions in which he took part, and the transactions he had carried on, numbered 534, while his predecessors only left in writing eighty-five. The diplomatic despatches alone, at three sous a sheet, had in twelve years been worth 4,900 florins to his principal clerk, Van den Bosch.

De Witt had, at the same time, made some important retrenchments in all departments of the administration. His vigilance descended to the most trifling details, even to the reduction of the cost of copying and translating, which in ten years caused a saving to the Treasury of 100,000 florins. He had lightened the charges upon Holland by adding to the federal budget more than a third of the expenses of the embassies, of which Holland had hitherto had to cover the deficiency, thus since his appointment having saved an outlay which might be calculated at 2,000,000 florins.

He had moreover obtained from the other provinces a supplementary contribution for the purpose of repaying the sum, 1,500,000 florins, advanced to them by Holland when she undertook in the last war against England to provide funds for an increase of the naval forces. Finally, the great financial scheme which De Witt had successfully carried out at the very commencement of his ministry in 1655, namely, the reduction of the interest on the sinking fund, the extinction of life annuities, had prevented the increase of the national debt, in spite of loans successively contracted in the course of the late war amounting to about seventeen millions. A saving of 1,400,000 florins on the interest to be paid completed the profit realised.[1] Such was the account rendered of the administration of the Grand Pensionary in the carefully elaborated report drawn up by the councillor deputies to whom that duty had been entrusted by the States. The result at which they arrived was, that, including diplomatic presents which the Prime Minister had refused and which were valued at 150,000 florins, the pecuniary benefits which he would have derived from his labours, treating them as a man of business, would have been worth an honorarium of 567,500 florins. It was thus that the States rendered to De Witt the justice to which he had a claim by drawing up a species of balance

[1] According to M. Veegens (*Notice on Dutch Loans during the Administration of the Grand Pensionary de Witt*), the national debt in 1654, before the reduction of interest, was 6,907,790 florins. In 1671, after the loans for the war with England, it amounted to 5,509,519 florins, thus showing a reduction of 1,398,271 florins.

sheet, applying a custom of the Dutch burghers to the administration of public affairs.

His integrity was above suspicion and was recognised even by his enemies. 'Whilst his predecessors could receive any presents not specially prohibited,' wrote the councillor deputies in the memorandum asking for an increase of his salary, 'the Grand Pensionary has cut off all such ordinary methods of recognition; and the better to protect himself from them has caused them to be formally forbidden in his instructions.' De Witt remained always inflexible in his scruples on this point. His private letters showed that he even refused presents of game, barrels of biscuits, and baskets of hops. One of his friends writes to him: 'I have just received a little purse, the novelty of which seems to render it worthy to be offered to your wife, as a fairing. I have not forgotten your last rejection of a gift from me, and the good reasons you gave. So I will not again offer anything to yourself.'

His passion for the service of his country, as well as his disinterestedness, formed an insurmountable barrier to the liberalities of sovereigns who wished to gain him to their interests. The correspondence of the French ambassadors, De Thou, D'Estrades, and Pomponne, describe him as absolutely incorruptible. 'It is well,' writes De Thou, 'to support the Grand Pensionary by all honest and legitimate means, but he is a man to whom recompense must not be mentioned, as from his disposition and the position he holds he would look upon the proposal as an insult.' Louis XIV. on his side writes to D'Estrades, 'I should consider any amount well spent which would bring the Grand Pensionary entirely over to my interests. But it must be done with great caution, as, from the way in which he has been represented to me, he is a man to stand by his principles, and to glory in his refusal of such proposals.' Count d'Estrades confirmed this judgment, declaring 'that he considered him and his brother as amongst the few with whom such pecuniary offers would be of no avail;' and De Witt might well write proudly to Bruyninex, the envoy of the States at Vienna, on the occasion of some calumnious imputations which represented him in

certain foreign courts as having been bought by France. 'I trouble myself little about them; everyone here knows that I have never defiled myself with such infamies, and these reports will find no echo here.'

Indifferent to the attractions and vulgar pleasures of wealth, John de Witt was content with a very modest establishment. He had five clerks or secretaries for the despatch of public affairs, besides his chief clerk, Van den Bosch, 'an honest man, but of a servile nature,' who had replaced the faithless Van Messen; two domestic clerks or ushers, Bacherus and Van Ouvenaller, to whom the States paid 600 florins a year, and who were his confidential agents, sufficed for his personal business. He had in his own service only a valet and a coachman. 'When he paid his visits of ceremony,' relates an eyewitness, Sir William Temple, 'the valet put on a plain livery coat, and followed the carriage in the street.' 'I have seen him at the Hague,' wrote a French ambassador, 'on foot like one of the townspeople, followed by a servant dressed in grey, who carried a red velvet bag in which were the most important papers in Europe, which he was going to lay before the Assembly of the States.' No outward show distinguished him from the other deputies and ministers of the republic. His table was frugal, and was laid only for his family and one or two friends. He had no luxuries, with the exception of a choice library which his son increased by many acquisitions. His house was open to all who desired to see him, and he made himself accessible to all without being familiar with anyone, thus combining dignity with simplicity.

De Witt kept himself at the same time on his guard against the jealousy to which the exercise of the preponderant authority exposed him, and which was such that the Elector of Saxony addressed his envoy's letters of credence to him instead of to the States-General. He was so faithful in the observance of the duties of his office that even in writing mere letters of politeness to foreign princes he never failed to point out to them 'that he never, if he could avoid it, entered into any correspondence except through the medium of the ambassadors and envoys of the States.' He never missed an occasion of

telling those who came to him to obtain favours that he had no power beyond that of proposing resolutions to the States, and carrying out in their name such as they had accepted. The following letter, which he wrote to the ambassador of the United Provinces in England, shows how scrupulous he was. 'Knowing as you do,' he observes, 'how easily the Dutch are alarmed lest a minister should take too much upon himself and, as they say, play the master; and also how disastrous such an impression is in a free republic for all those who share in the government, and especially for those whose functions are only temporary, I beg you in future to make no mention of me personally in your despatches.' He liked to exercise power, but avoided all ostentation.

The authority which he exercised as the elected minister of a republic caused his friendship to be sought by kings and their advisers, whilst at the same time his renown made the most illustrious personages of the time desirous to know and correspond with him. A manuscript despatch sent by M. de Callières, French ambassador at the Hague at the close of the century, gives a curious account of an interview between the Grand Pensionary and Cardinal de Retz as he received it from M. de Dickeritt, a former friend of John de Witt. 'Cardinal de Retz,' he writes, 'being in hiding in Holland, resolved to see the Pensionary, and to make himself known to him before he left this country.' This was in 1666. He went in plain clothes to his reception in his house at the Hague, and after having allowed the more eager to precede him, he drew him aside, telling him he was a foreigner who desired to speak to him in private. The Grand Pensionary, without asking him who he was, begged him to enter his study, where he rejoined him almost immediately, and the Cardinal de Retz said to him, 'I know, sir, that you are French by inclination, and that you have great consideration for the Court of France; that M. d'Estrades, who is minister here, is my enemy and would do anything to have me in his power. I know, moreover, that he is your particular friend; nevertheless, I cannot quit this country without seeing and knowing a man of your worth, and testifying to the esteem I have for your merits,

by making myself known to you. I am that Cardinal de Retz who has had the misfortune to fall into disgrace with the King. Do not refuse me the pleasure of spending an evening with you.' The Grand Pensionary, touched by this confidence, thanked him warmly; and in order to be more at liberty to converse without compromising the Cardinal, invited him to his country house, where he would be ready to receive him. The Cardinal de Retz said afterwards to M. de Dickeritt, that he had been no less charmed by De Witt's breadth of mind than by his gentleness and modesty.

The superiority of his talent and the greatness of his character made him worthy to rank in the highest place. 'Nothing escapes him,' was the verdict of Ruyter, a judge capable of appreciating him. It was enough for him to wish to understand, and everything was clear to him. His profound knowledge of the varied interests of the principal States and his natural versatility of mind rendered him, in a very short time, one of the ablest negotiators of his day. He could foresee as well as overcome all diplomatic difficulties, and always recommended the republican envoys to observe such circumspection in their conduct and correspondence as to give no possible cause of complaint to foreign courts. His ability enabled him to make capital out of the most intricate situations. 'The example to follow,' he writes to Van Beuningen, 'is that of the fisherman who holds his line in the water, however troubled it may be, so that should a fish take the bait, he is ready to draw it in.' The quickness of his penetration enabled him to detect all intrigues, and it was by his straightforwardness that he generally baffled them. He inspired the confidence which he felt himself, having gradually got rid, as he told Temple, of an inclination to suspicion, which had led him into many mistakes.

Having the power both of penetrating the thoughts of others and of concealing his own, the Grand Pensionary's sole *ruse* was silence, to which those he was negotiating with were so much accustomed, that they never could tell whether he was silent from premeditation or from habit. He liked to go straight to the point, and would not allow himself to be

deterred by any obstacles placed in his way by the complicated machinery of the republican constitution, and he had now once more given proof, by the Triple Alliance, that he could act with as much decision as promptitude in the conduct of a negotiation.

Such qualities, joined to a great gift of persuasion, an immense aptitude for work, and most uncommon strength of will, insured him the lead in the States of Holland, whom he had made masters of the States-General. He was said to be 'their eye, their tongue, and their arm.' The authority which he exercised in their assembly, and that which he had acquired for them over the other provinces, placed the government of the republic in his hands. 'His is the intelligence, so to speak,' writes De Thou, 'which guides the government wheel.' A powerful speaker, more by argument than by eloquence, always master of himself, never allowing himself to be betrayed into imprudent or violent expressions, he possessed the art of arranging those compromises to which the States constantly had recourse to bring their deliberations to a conclusion. From the very commencement of his ministry he merited the description given of him by the French ambassador, Chanut, of 'an ingenious man, familiar with all expedients.' 'Hardworking,' writes De Thou, 'whilst most of his countrymen are very lazy, he alone thoroughly knows the secret and course of affairs, since they all pass through his hands, and he only communicates so much of them as he chooses to his confidants—and thus he maintains himself in office.' Much taken up with his health, of which he was always careful, and thinking little about his life, which he was always ready to sacrifice, he devoted himself unreservedly to the duties of his ministry.

As guardian of the constitution of his country, commissioned by the chief article in his instructions to preserve intact the privileges, rights, customs, and usages of the province of Holland as well as the lawful authority of the States, he considered himself bound by the oath he had taken never to allow of its being assailed, and he was resolved to defend with equal fidelity and courage the charge confided to him. An

allegorical picture of the time represents him as a swan with extended wings, protecting its nest from the dogs who are swimming round it, with this explanatory inscription: 'The Grand Pensionary;' 'Holland;' 'The enemies of the State.'

Amongst his portraits by the great painters of the day, including Baan and Netscher, the one which ranks as a masterpiece of Dutch painting is that by John Baan, belonging to the museum at Amsterdam, and of which the finest engraving is by Lambert Visscher. It represents De Witt at the bar of the States of Holland, with the members seen in their places. He holds in his hand the seals of which he was the keeper, and stands in the attitude he maintained when he was dominating the Assembly by his words. The portrait which most resembled him was, according to the most authentic testimony, that on the engraving of which his eldest daughter wrote these words: 'This engraving is the one which best recalls Papa.' It is the work of Netscher. Engraved by Bary and published by Engelvaert in 1670, it bears an inscription in verse by Gerard Brandt, consecrated to the defence of John de Witt. The Grand Pensionary is represented in full face, standing, wrapped in a Japanese robe, which he holds crossed over his chest, his hair falling in curls on his shoulders, and his left hand supported on a balustrade, while his countenance bears the calm and thoughtful expression of the statesman.

Like so many others, he spent himself in the ungrateful service of the public by remaining too long in power. But the fifteen years of his ministry, so gloriously filled, had enabled him to place a small republic on an equality with the greatest monarchies of Europe; and to keep in the background during the entire minority of William II.'s son the Orange party, which deprived of a leader would have fatally compromised the interests of the United Provinces in all the dangers of a minority.

The Grand Pensionary none the less had to bear the crushing weight of misfortune. He was to expiate the error of having presumed too far on the power of the United Provinces and the attachment of the Dutch middle class to the government which had placed the power in their hands. De

Witt perished under the blows of a foreign invasion which he had done all he could to avert: a victim to the popular fury, which might tear him to pieces but could not deprive him of his fame; and he justified to posterity the encomium bestowed upon him by two foreign ambassadors—his contemporaries—who said that if he had allowed himself to be blinded, it was by his passion for the greatness and liberty of his country.

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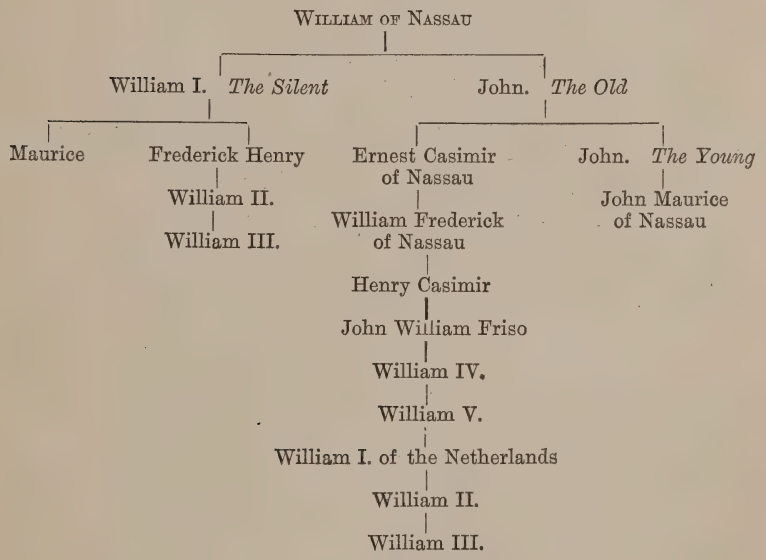

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